

PUBLIC

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Death Penalty

8 May 2001

OMAN

Hatem 'Ali Nour Baksh (Pakistani national)

'Abdul Rahman Murad Mohammed (Pakistani national)

The two men named above, both Pakistani nationals, have been sentenced to death, reportedly on drug and firearm charges. It is feared that they will be executed once their convictions have been ratified.

They were reportedly arrested on 17 February 2001 in possession of a tonne of hashish, two guns and ammunition. On 30 April a Magistrate's Court sentenced them to death, reportedly on charges of drug smuggling, possession of firearms without a licence and violation of the residence law for foreigners.

Three other men were arrested with them. Of these, the court convicted Saudi Arabian national Hassan 'Awadh Hamd al-Mukhlis of involvement in drug trafficking, and sentenced him to seven years' imprisonment, but acquitted the other two men, both Omani nationals.

Under Omani law, it is not possible to appeal against death sentences, although such sentences have to be ratified by a legal committee and by the Sultan before they can be carried out. The highest religious authority in the country, the Grand Mufti, is a member of the committee that approves death sentences.

Amnesty International is concerned that denying the men the right to appeal is a violation of the United Nations (UN) Safeguards Guaranteeing Protection of the Rights of Those Facing the Death Penalty, which state that "anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon, or commutation of sentence". Oman has been a UN member since 1971 and is party to the UN Safeguards Guaranteeing Protection of the Rights of Those Facing the Death Penalty.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Death sentences are usually carried out by firing squad. Eleven people have been executed so far this year.

Amnesty International considers the death penalty to be the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, and a violation of the right to life, as guaranteed by Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- urging the authorities to allow Hatem 'Ali Nour Baksh and 'Abdul Rahman Murad Mohammed to appeal against their death sentences, in line with the UN Safeguards Guaranteeing Protection of the Rights of Those Facing the Death Penalty;
- urging the authorities to commute the death sentences;
- calling for a moratorium on the use of the death penalty in Oman.

APPEALS TO: (please note that fax numbers can be difficult to reach)

Sultan of Oman

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said

Diwan of the Royal Court
PO Box 632, Muscat 113
Sultanate of Oman
Salutation: Your Majesty

Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman
His Excellency Sheikh Ahmed bin Hamad Al-Khalili
Office of the General Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman
PO Box 354, Ruwi 112
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: + 968 601 118
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice
His Excellency Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdullah bin Zaher al-Hinai
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice
PO Box 354, Muscat Code 112
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: + 968 602 725
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior
His Excellency 'Ali bin Hamud bin 'Ali al-Busaidi
Minister of Interior, Ministry of Interior
PO Box 127, Ruwi 112
Sultanate of Oman
Fax: + 968 602 244
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: to diplomatic representatives of Oman accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 June 2001.