

URGENT ACTION

NIGERIAN AT RISK OF EXECUTION IN SAUDI ARABIA

Nigerian national Suliamon Olufemi remains at risk of execution in Saudi Arabia. On 19 April, 11 of his co-defendants were released from prison and deported to Nigeria, having completed their 15-year sentences. Suliamon Olufemi was sentenced to death in 2005 after an unfair trial and has exhausted all of his appeals.

On 17 May 2005, 39-year-old **Suliamon Olufemi** was sentenced to death in a closed trial in connection with the murder of a policeman in Jeddah in 2002. Eleven other Nigerian nationals were each sentenced in the same case to 15 years in prison and 1,000 lashes. On 19 April, Suliamon Olufemi's 11 co-defendants were released from Dhaban prison outside Jeddah, southwestern Saudi Arabia, having completed their respective sentences, including being subjected to 1,000 lashes each. On 27 April, 10 of the men were deported to Nigeria while one other was deported approximately one month later to the same country.

Suliamon Olufemi and his co-defendants were among hundreds of foreign nationals from Somalia, Ghana and Nigeria detained in mass arrests in September 2002, following a dispute which resulted in the death of a Saudi Arabian policeman. During his pre-trial detention and throughout his trial, Suliamon Olufemi did not have a lawyer or consular assistance and was not given adequate translation or interpretation facilities. He and some of the other men arrested with him have said that they were tortured and otherwise ill-treated during interrogation and were forced to put their thumbprints as their signature on a statement in Arabic, a language which they could not read, and which they said a judge in the court of first instance referred to as a 'confession'.

According to information received from the Saudi Arabian Human Rights Commission in 2007, the death sentence against Suliamon Olufemi has been upheld by the Court of Cassation and the Supreme Judicial Council, meaning he has no further recourse to appeal. Suliamon Olufemi is currently detained in Dhaban Prison in Jeddah and has exhausted all of his legal avenues for appeal. He continues to maintain his innocence.

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Urging the Saudi Arabian authorities to quash the conviction of Suliamon Olufemi, and order a retrial in line with international fair trial standards without recourse to the death penalty;
- Calling on them to order an independent investigation into his allegation of torture and other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to grant him regular access to a lawyer of his choice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 AUGUST 2017 TO:

King and Prime Minister

His Majesty Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques
Office of His Majesty the King
Royal Court, Riyadh
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: (via Ministry of Interior)
+966 11 403 3125 (please keep trying)
Twitter: @KingSalman
Salutation: Your Majesty

Minister of Foreign Affairs

His Excellency Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Postal Code: 55937
Riyadh 11544
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 11 412 2080
Twitter: @KSAMOFA
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria
His Excellency Geoffrey Onyeama
Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Tafawa Balewa House
Off Ahmadu Bello Way
Abuja
Nigeria
Email: info@foreignaffairs.gov.ng
Twitter: @GeoffreyOnyeama
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Nawaf bin Abdul Aziz - Ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in London, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 30 Charles Street, Mayfair, London, W1J 5DZ tel: 020 7917 3000 or 02079173288, fax 02079173113 email: ukemb@mofa.gov.sa complete the webform here: <http://embassies.mofa.gov.sa/sites/uk/EN/ContactDiplomaticMission/Pages/ContactWithDiplomaticMission.aspx>; twitter: @SaudiEmbassyUK, Salutation: Your Royal Highness **Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

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INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to information provided to Amnesty International on 28 September 2002, a group of local men, among them a policeman, arrived in an area of Jeddah where many African nationals worked as car cleaners. A dispute broke out between the local men and the foreign nationals which resulted in the death of a policeman. In the early morning of the following day, security forces in the city carried out mass arrests of foreign nationals. Hundreds of Africans were arrested and subsequently deported, some of them after serving prison sentences and flogging. However, Suliamon Olufemi and 12 other Nigerians are understood to have been held incommunicado until May 2005 when they were first allowed a visit from their consular representative.

It is understood that the trial of the 13 men began in March 2004. On 17 May 2005, Suliamon Olufemi was sentenced to death and the 12 others were handed prison terms and flogging. They were initially said to have been sentenced to five years' imprisonment and 500 lashes but their sentences were increased on appeal in 2008 to 15 years' imprisonment and 1,000 lashes. In September 2008, one of the men, Nurudeen Sani, died in custody. His fellow prisoners have stated he had not been afforded adequate medical attention for illnesses he was suffering.

On 19 April, Suliamon Olufemi's 11 co-defendants were taken from Dhaban prison to a deportation camp in Jeddah. They were detained there until 27 April when 10 of the men were deported on a flight to Nigeria. The 11th of Suliamon Olufemi's co-defendants was returned to Nigeria approximately one month later.

According to Shari'a law, if a crime is punished under the rule of *qisas* (retribution), as in Suliamon Olufemi's case, relatives of the murder victim have the right to decide if the offender should be executed or pardoned, in which case the death penalty is dropped, sometimes in return for *diyya* (compensation or "blood money"). Pardons by victims' relatives must be certified by courts of law. However, this does not automatically mean that a convicted person is spared from execution since judges have the power to invoke *hadd* (divinely prescribed fixed offences and punishments) and consider the murder as harmful to public order in addition to it being a crime against the victim and his family.

Saudi Arabia is one of the top executioners in the world: more than 2400 people were executed there between 1985 and 2016. So far this year it has executed at least 40 people.

The death penalty is used disproportionately against foreign nationals in Saudi Arabia, particularly migrant workers from poor and developing countries in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Of the total 2,418 executions recorded between January 1985 and December 2016, at least 1,137, or some 47%, were of foreign nationals.

The authorities repeatedly fail to abide by international standards for fair trial and UN Safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty. Trials in death penalty cases are often unfair and frequently summary, with no legal assistance or representation for those accused through the various stages of detention and trial. Defendants may be convicted solely on the basis of "confessions" obtained under torture or other ill-treatment.

The Saudi Arabian authorities routinely fail to inform families of detainees and, in the case of foreign nationals, their foreign consulates of the date of executions. They also fail to directly inform them of executions after they have been carried out. In many instances, convicted prisoners are informed of their impending execution a day before it is carried out, specifically when they are taken to a solitary cell in preparation for it. In some cases, including those of foreign nationals, family members and foreign consulates have found out about the execution of their relative or national through the media or public announcements.

The death penalty is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty at all times, regardless of who is accused, the crime, their guilt or innocence or method of execution.