

Saudi Arabia beheads murderer... and then CRUCIFIES his body

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By Jaymi McCann

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Saudi authorities have beheaded a murderer and crucified his body after he killed and raped a Pakistani national.

The kingdom's interior ministry announced the execution, stating that the man had murdered and sodomised another male. Both actions are punishable by death.

'The Yemeni citizen Mohammed Rashad Khairi Hussain killed a Pakistani, Pashteh Sayed Khan, after he committed sodomy with him,' said a statement carried by state news agency SPA.

Hussain was also convicted of robbery and carrying out a series of attacks. The execution, in the southern city of Jizan, was followed by crucifixion, a punishment used by the ultra-conservative country for serious crimes.

Saudi Arabia have been criticised in the international community for their harsh punishments, including executions by beheading and firing squad. There have been 28 people beheaded in Saudi Arabia this year.

In 2012, they executed 76 people, according to an AFP tally based on official figures, while the US-based Human Rights Watch put the number at 69.

The oil-rich kingdom follows a strict implementation of Islamic law, or Shariah, under which people convicted of murder, rape or armed robbery can be executed, usually by sword.

The announcement comes after Amnesty International released the final words of a man sentenced to death by firing squad.

He was allegedly forced to confess after the authorities threatened to torture his mother.

Seven juveniles were arrested and convicted for armed robbery and sentenced to death in the Southern city of Abha after their appeals to the king were rejected.

One of the robbers was interviewed by the human rights charity before his death.

He said: 'I have nine hours left until I die. We found this out through friends and relatives who saw the market square being prepared for the execution.

'There are now seven spots in the square for seven people to be shot. It's going to be in public, in the market, in the city of Abha.

'We don't know what we are supposed to have done wrong.

'We were forced to make confessions. We were mistreated by the investigators - they took our clothes and it was winter. They tortured us by suspending us from chains on the wall.

'They also used psychological torture such as threatening they would bring in our mothers and torture them in front of us.

'I didn't kill anyone - we were tried for robbery and we were forced to confess. I hope the execution will be stopped.

'I wish for it to be stopped and for a fair trial and for a reinvestigation. The trial was totally unjust.'

One of the men told The Associated Press last month he was only 15 when he was arrested as part of a ring that stole jewelry in 2004 and 2005. It was also reported that they had no access to lawyers.

The south has been marginalized and suffered discrimination by the powerful central Saudi region where the capital, Riyadh, and holy shrines of Mecca and Medina are located.

It was reported on March 13 that the execution went ahead despite appeals from human rights charities.

There was also an international outcry, including from human rights groups, after a Sri Lankan maid, Rizana Nafeek, was beheaded in public by sword last month.

Miss Nafeek was sentenced to death aged 17 in 2007 after her Saudi employer accused her of strangling his four-month-old baby two years earlier after a dispute with the child's mother.

A government spokesman said Riyadh: 'deplores the statements made... about the execution of a Sri Lankan maid who had plotted and killed an infant by suffocating him to death one week after she arrived in the kingdom.'

The case soured the kingdom's diplomatic relations with Sri Lanka, which on Thursday recalled its ambassador to Saudi Arabia in protest.

The UN's main human rights body on Friday expressed 'deep dismay' at the beheading, while the European Union said it had asked Saudi authorities to commute the death penalty.

Riyadh, however, rejected the statements as 'external interference' in its domestic affairs.

The spokesman said: Saudi Arabia 'respects... all rules and laws and protects the rights of its people and residents, and completely rejects any intervention in its affairs and judicial verdicts, whatever the excuse.'