

DEATH PENALTY SUMMARY – AUGUST 2015

International Update (8th July – 12th August)

- **Tunisia** – 25.7.15 – a new counter-terrorism law has been passed which includes the use of the death penalty.
- **USA - Oklahoma** – 9.7.15 – following the ruling of the US Supreme Court that midazolam can be used, execution dates have been set for the three prisoners who challenged its use (Richard Glossip: 16.9.15; Benjamin Cole: 7.10.15; John Grant: 28.10.15).
- **UAE** – 13.7.15 – the execution took place of Ala'a Badr Abdullah al-Hashimi, convicted of killing an American teacher and trying to bomb an American-Egyptian doctor. She was tried on charges of terrorism by a Security Court, with no possibility of an appeal, despite her claim of mental illness.
- **Zambia** – 17.7.15 – *President Edgar Lungu commuted the death sentences of 332 prisoners to life imprisonment. Al UK welcomed his action as a 'laudable first step'.*
- **Iran** – 24.7.15 - reports indicate that at least 694 executions have been carried out in the first half of 2015
- **Pakistan**
 - 27.7.15 - following a month-long break for Ramadan, Pakistan resumed its practice of capital punishment with the executions of Farooq and Karim Nawaz, both convicted of murder.
 - 5.8.15 – Pakistan's Supreme Court ruled that secret military courts are legal and can pass judgements on civilians. Legal challenges at the Supreme Court regarding the constitutionality of these courts have been dismissed.
- **Indonesia** – 28.7.15 – in the course of a trade visit, David Cameron raised the case of Lindsay Sandiford with the authorities.
- **Libya** – 28.7.15 – Saif-al Islam, son of Gaddafi, was condemned to death (with others). He is thought unlikely to be executed as he is currently in the hands of rebels.
- **India** – 30.7.15 – the execution took place of Yakub Memon, convicted of involvement in a series of co-ordinated terrorists attacks in Mumbai in 1993.

- **Chad** – 30.7.15 – following a spate of attacks by Boko Haram, the Government re-introduced the death penalty for terrorism
- **UK** – 3.8.15 – *the Independent reported that the FCO has dropped explicit references to abolishing the death penalty from its global human rights work. Despite its 2014 Human Rights and Democracy report in which the Government department claimed their work in this area was part of ‘sustained and long term efforts to see an end to the death penalty world-wide’, all references to the death penalty are set to vanish from its stated priorities. In reporting this, the Times of India made a pointed reference to the British Government’s condemnation of last year’s hanging of the convicted Terrorist, Ajimal Kasab.*
- **Saudi Arabia** – 5.8.15 – Mugrib al-Thanyan, convicted of shooting dead a fellow Saudi, was beheaded. He was the 110th person to be executed this year.

Urgent Actions – *There are particular concerns around the sentencing to death/executions in Pakistan and Iran of those believed to be juveniles at the time of the alleged crimes.*

- **Indonesia** – UA 305/14 – the Filipino national, Mary Jane Velosa, granted a last-minute stay of execution in April, is at risk of execution following the end of the month of Ramadan. (*Circulated to DPLWG 9.7.15*)
- **Sudan** – UA 28/15 – Revds Yat Michael and Peter Yen are currently being held in solitary confinement and are at risk of flogging and the death penalty if convicted in a trial believed to be related to the exercise of their freedom of religion. (*Circulated to DPLWG 9.7.15*)
- **Pakistan** – UA 59/15 – the execution of Shafqat Hussain was scheduled for the fifth time, to take place on 4th August. His lawyers maintained he was under 18 years of age at the time of the crime, and that he was forced to ‘confess’ under torture. (*Circulated to DPLWG 29.7.15*) **Despite international protest, he was executed on 4th August.**
- **Iran** –
 - UA 165/15 – Salar Shadizadi, convicted of a murder allegedly committed at the age of 15, was scheduled to be executed on 1st August. (*Circulated to DLWG 29.7.15*). His execution was then re-scheduled to take place on 10th August. (*Circulated to DPLWG 4.8.15*)
Note – France has raised its concerns about this case and reaffirmed ‘its constant opposition to the death penalty, anywhere and in any conditions’. As of 12.8.15, it has not been possible to establish whether Salar Shadizadi has been executed.
 - UA 212/14 – Mohammad Ali Taheri has been sentenced to death for ‘spreading corruption on earth’ through his spiritual beliefs and

teachings. He is a Prisoner of Conscience. (*Circulated to DPLWG 10.8.15*)

- **USA – Texas** – UA 176.15 – Bernardo Aban Tercero, a Nicaraguan national, is scheduled for execution on 26th August. Convicted of murder, an appeal has been made for clemency, based on the poor quality of his legal representation at his trial and for state-level appeals. (*Circulated to DPLWG 7.8.15*)

Campaigns

- **Saudi Arabia** – a letter was sent to John Glen MP on 13.7.15 to follow up his promise of seeking permission from the Minister for his letter to be published on the website. His reply, together with that of the Minister, can be read on the Website. Both state their belief that engaging with the authorities behind the scenes is more constructive than raising the matter publicly.

On 5th August a further letter was sent to John Glen on behalf of the Group expressing concern at the reported decision of the FCO to drop explicit references to the Death Penalty from its global human rights work.

- **Reggie Clemons** – cards from members of the Group have been sent to Reggie Clemons for his birthday on 30th August. Reggie has now been on Death Row for 22 years, and it is almost two years since the Special Judge's findings were passed to the Supreme Court for their final decision.
- **World Day Against the Death Penalty** – Plans are in progress for a Vigil to be held to mark World Day Against the Death Penalty, which this year falls on Saturday 10th October. It is hoped to hold the Vigil at St Thomas's or in the Cathedral but, as it has proved difficult for either to offer us a time slot on the actual day, the Vigil may need to be moved to the following Saturday, 17th October. Up-to-date information will be posted on the Website as soon as possible.