

Beat: News

Saudi Arabia executes 3 more men by beheading

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USPA News - Three men previously convicted of murder were decapitated by sword in western Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, the government said, disregarding concerns raised by human rights organizations and raising the number of people executed this month alone to 26. The latest executions took place on Wednesday in different parts of southwestern and western regions of the kingdom, according to statements issued by the Saudi Interior Ministry. It warned that the government will continue to carry out punishments according to Sharia law against anyone who commits crimes.

One of the executions took place in the port city of Jizan, where Moussa bin Muqliz Zafri was beheaded for the stabbing death of Yehya bin Nashib Hamdi. The Interior Minister said Zafri had confessed to killing Hamdi over a dispute between them, after which the court convicted him and sentenced him to death. The second execution took place in the city of Najran, where Naji Al Mutlaq was beheaded for the murder of fellow tribesman Abdulhadi Al Mutlaq. The ministry said Naji Al Mutlaq had also confessed to investigators and that he killed his victim by shooting him with a machine gun. A motive was not given. The third execution took place in Medina, where Nawaf al-Mutairi was beheaded for murdering Adel al-Harbi with a machine gun. "The Ministry of Interior affirms that the Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is keen on the preservation of security, the establishment of justice and the implementation of the orders of Allah Almighty against anyone who attacks the secured people and sheds their blood," the ministry said. "It warns anyone who tries to commit such actions that he or she will be punished according to Sharia." Wednesday's beheadings raise the number of people executed in Saudi Arabia so far this month to 26, leading to condemnation from human rights organizations as some have been killed for non-lethal crimes. "Any execution is appalling, but executions for crimes such as drug smuggling or sorcery that result in no loss of life are particularly egregious," said Sarah Leah Whitson of Human Rights Watch. Amnesty International also expressed its concern earlier this month after four family members were executed on the same day for merely possessing hashish. "The recent increase in executions in Saudi Arabia is a deeply disturbing deterioration. The authorities must act immediately to halt this cruel practice," said Said Boumedouha of Amnesty International. At least 41 people have been executed in Saudi Arabia so far this year, following 79 executions last year. The kingdom applies the death penalty for a large number of crimes, including drug offenses, apostasy, sorcery and witchcraft. Both witchcraft and sorcery are not defined as crimes in Saudi Arabia, but human rights organizations say such charges have previously been used to prosecute people for exercising their right to freedom of speech or religion.

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