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## **Saudi Arabia executes woman convicted of practicing 'magic and sorcery'**

Associated Press (12.12.11) / HRWF (19.01.12) - Saudi authorities have executed a woman convicted of practicing magic and sorcery.

The Saudi Interior Ministry says in a statement the execution took place Monday, but gave no details on the woman's crime.

The London-based al-Hayat daily, however, quoted Abdullah al-Mohsen, chief of the religious police who arrested the woman, as saying she had tricked people into thinking she could treat illnesses, charging them \$800 per session.

The paper said a female investigator followed up, and the woman was arrested in April, 2009, and later convicted in a Saudi court.

It did not give the woman's name, but said she was in her 60s.

The execution brings the total to 76 this year in Saudi Arabia, according to an Associated Press count. At least three have been women.

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## **42 Ethiopian Christians arrested in Saudi Arabia**

International Christian Concern (ICC) (17.12.2011) / HRWF (19.12.2011) – [www.hrwf.net](http://www.hrwf.net) – International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that Saudi security forces arrested 42 Ethiopian Christians at a prayer gathering in Jeddah on Thursday. The location of the detained Christians is unknown.

On December 15, Saudi police and security officers raided an evening prayer meeting at the home of an Ethiopian Christian in the Al-Safa district of Jeddah. Those attending the service were reportedly beaten and threatened before being arrested.

"Security officials broke [into] the house and captured... beat and threatened them for death... They divided the men and the women and they are torturing them [in prison]," an Ethiopian and Eritrean Christian immigrant community living in Europe wrote in a desperate appeal for help to the ambassadors of European embassies in Riyadh on Friday.

"Saudi Arabian officials have arrested Christians in the past but it is unprecedented for them to arrest 42 Christians at one time," a church leader in Jeddah, who asked not to be named for security reasons, told ICC. "We are particularly concerned about the children of the detained Christians."

Two Ethiopian fellowships in Saudi Arabia informed ICC that they will temporarily postpone services until the situation calms. Christians in Saudi Arabia, most of who enter the country as foreign workers, are not allowed to practice their faith openly. Saudi police have been known to raid private worship gatherings in homes, arrest and deport congregants, and confiscate Christian materials, including Bibles.

Aidan Clay, ICC Regional Manager for the Middle East, said, "Though not permitting a single church building where Christians can worship in Saudi Arabia, the Saudi government goes even further to assault the religious freedoms of its citizens and foreign workers by hunting for and arresting Christians who attend services in the privacy of their own homes. As a signatory to the UN Convention against Torture, we urge Saudi Arabia to end the abuse that the Ethiopian Christians have reportedly suffered in prison and to ensure their immediate release."

**Call the Saudi Arabian Embassy in your country to express your concerns:**

United States: (+1) 202 342 3800  
Canada: (+1) 613 237 4100  
United Kingdom: (+44) 207 9173-000  
Australia: (+61) 2 6250 7000  
Germany: (+49) 30 88 92 50  
France: (+33) 1 56 79 4000

For interviews, contact Jonathan Racho, Regional Manager for Africa: [jonathan@persecution.org](mailto:jonathan@persecution.org).

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## **Christians in prison, beaten in Saudi Arabia**

### ***Property destroyed, apartment vandalized***

International Christian Concern (21.03.2011) / HRWF (22.03.2011) - <http://www.hrwf.net> - International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that two Indian Christians working in Saudi Arabia have been arrested in Batha, Riyadh, and sentenced to 45 days in prison.

On March 11, 2010, at 8:30 PM local time, Vasantha Sekhar and Nese Yohan were arrested and beaten. They were accused of proselytizing. ICC contacts in Saudi Arabia believe they were arrested to keep them from practicing Christianity privately in their home.

While in prison awaiting trial, their apartment was ransacked. They face uncertainty regarding their future. An employer has returned the passport of one of the Christians, making it clear that his job is no longer available, and he will be expelled. The other Christian awaits information regarding his legal status and job.

Saudi Arabia has a long history of quietly cracking down on Christians. In 2004, 28 Indian workers were arrested in Messriam for practicing Christianity. The charges were dropped, but in 2010 they were brought up again. One was deported, and one has been arrested. In another case, 16 Indian workers were arrested in February 2008, and then released after three days. In 2010, eight left the country of their own accord and three of the remaining eight were issued deportation orders and expelled.

*"These two Christians have faced false charges and false evidence. The Saudi*

*government continues to engage in an array of severe violations of human rights as part of its repression of freedom of religion,”* said Logan Maurer, ICC Advocacy Director.

Please contact Saudi Arabia officials and politely ask them to release and not expel vulnerable religious communities of Saudi Arabia.

**Saudi Arabia Embassies:** United States: (202) 342-3800 | UK: (+44-20)79173000 |  
Canada: (+1-613) 2374100

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