



International Update (11th June – 7th July 2015)

- **Malaysia** – 11.6.15 – A Cabinet Minister called for a re-think on the imposition of the death penalty for drug trafficking, arguing that it was not a deterrent. 1,000 are believed to be on death row, of which almost half have been sentenced for drug related crimes.
- **Pakistan** –
 - 14.6.15 – A one month moratorium has been imposed on executions during Ramadan. It is a ‘tradition’ that no-one is executed throughout this period. The Inspector of Prisons announced his plan to arrange the execution of ‘two dozen’ prisoners before the month began
 - It is believed that at least 15 people were executed in the week running up to Ramadan
- **Egypt** – 16.6.15 - Following the review by the Grand Mufti, the death sentences on President Morsi and 102 others were upheld. An appeal can still be made before Egypt’s highest Court. Al argue that all charges should be dropped as the President and others were subjected to enforced disappearances following his removal from power, and evidence obtained during this period should not be used.

20.6.15 – Surprise and/or criticism was expressed by a number of NGO’s (including Al and the Muslim Association of GB) at the British Govt’s invitation to President Sisi to visit the UK.
- **Saudi Arabia** – 16.6.15 – the 100th beheading was carried out. To date, many foreigners have been executed in 2015, including 8 Yemenis, 10 Pakistanis, Syrians, Jordanians, and individuals from Burma, the Philippines, Chad, Eritrea and the Sudan. Many of the sentences have been for drugs related offences, for which the death penalty is not stipulated under the strict Islamic Laws, but have been at the discretion of the Judges. *The Express Newspaper group criticised the UK Government for remaining silent.*
- **Vietnam** – 18.6.14 – the National Assembly abolished the death penalty for several crimes, but retained it for corruption.
- **USA**
 - **Texas** – 18.6.14 – Gregory Rousseau was executed by lethal injection. Convicted of murder and robbery, he maintained his innocence. Shortly before his execution, he was interviewed by Channel 4.

- 29.6.15 – **The US Supreme Court** upheld the use of midazolam, the contentious drug used in executions, saying it does not violate a ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The drug had raised concerns after it was used in executions in three US states in 2014 that took longer than usual (in particular that of Clayton Lockett, who took 43 minutes to die).
The ruling was made on a 5 to 2 decision – *the two dissenting justices have, however, stated they think it highly likely that the death penalty is itself unconstitutional.*
- **Sudan – Christians in Sudan – 22.6.14** – Revds Yat Michael and Peter Yen have been charged with undermining the constitutional system and waging war against the State. Both charges carry the death penalty. AI has declared them to be prisoners of conscience, imprisoned for the peaceful expression of their religious convictions.
- **Indonesia – 22.6.14** – a Court in Indonesia rejected the final appeal of French national, Serge Atlaoui, sentenced to death for drug offences. He had been granted a last-minute reprieve in April, when he was taken out of a group of foreigners who were executed. An execution date has not been set but it will not take place during the month of Ramadan.
- **Gambia – 23.6.15** – the President announced his wish to expand the use of the death penalty. Currently sanctioned only for those found guilty of causing death through violence or with toxic substances, he has called for a referendum. A ‘yes’ vote would mean the death penalty could be imposed whenever ‘the sentence was imposed by law’. The Opposition are calling for a ‘no’ vote, saying such a change would mean the Government could bring in a bill at any time covering any crime of their choosing.
- **Burkina Faso – 23.6.15** – the African sections of AI have sent an open letter to the Council of Ministers asking for their support in adopting the bill for the abolition of the death penalty approved on 10th June.
- **Japan – 25.6.15** – Tsuku Kanda was hanged in secret. He had been found guilty of robbing and killing a woman at random, with two accomplices he had met on the internet. The execution was the first to take place in Japan in 2015

Urgent Actions

Once again, no Death Penalty Urgent Actions have been received this month from AI in London. I contacted them to ask if it was possible for all DP UA’s to be sent to me

but was informed that their Data Base does not enable them to be selected in this way.

At their suggestion, I have requested that all email UA's should be sent to me. This will enable me to select those specific to the death penalty, forwarding them on to the Letter Writing Group and selecting one for the Group's monthly action as appropriate.

Campaigning

- **Reggie Clemons** – we continue to await the Court's final decision. We remain hopeful as Judge Manners, although he made little effort to conceal his belief in Reggie's guilt, concluded that he had had his constitutional rights violated because police failed to disclose evidence of his police inflicted injuries and his coercion into a confession.

At next month's meeting, Group members will be invited once again to sign cards for Reggie's birthday on 30th August.

- **Saudi Arabia** - A reply has been received from John Glen in response to the letter sent on behalf of the Group asking for a more robust response from the Government in respect of the executions in Saudi Arabia. I am awaiting permission from the Minister for this response to be published.
- **Moses Akatugba** – please go on to the website to read Moses' letter – 'My First Week of Freedom after 10 Years in a Nigerian Jail'. An item on Moses was published in the *Salisbury Journal* on 2 July but unfortunately is not available on line.
- **World Day Against the Death Penalty** - Caroline Butler has been asked to raise our request for support from AI in planning our event. It is hoped that this would be part of a national campaigning event.

LC

For the Salisbury group of Amnesty International www.salisburyai.com

Twitter: @salisburyai

7 July 2015

