

Beat: Miscellaneous

Saudi Arabia executes child rapist by beheading

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USPA News - A Saudi man convicted of kidnapping and raping a young boy has been decapitated by sword in the kingdom's north, the government reported on Monday, disregarding concerns raised by human rights organizations and raising the number of people executed there this year to 84. Suleiman bin Abdullah had been convicted of kidnapping a male child, tying him up and "engaging in the sin of homosexuality," the interior ministry said in a statement. It said the man had been sentenced to death by a court and both the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Judicial Council upheld the sentence.

Suleiman bin Abdullah was beheaded on Monday morning in Buraidah, about 335 kilometers (208 miles) northwest of Riyadh. Monday's beheading adds to a surge in executions that began in August and which has angered human rights organizations because many of those killed were convicted of 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," Sarah Leah Whitson, of Human Rights Watch, said earlier this year. Amnesty International also expressed its concern in August after four family members were all beheaded 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 Boumedouha, of Amnesty International, said at the time. At least 84 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 been used to prosecute people for exercising their right to freedom of speech or religion.

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