

Saudi Arabia's executions, 2014-2017

- **438 executions in under four years – 123 per year**
- **Over 2,000 to be executed by 2030**
- **41% of executions this year for nonviolent crimes**
- **Migrants disproportionately targeted**
- **'Terrorism' charges used on protesters**

As Saudi Arabia continues an unprecedented wave of executions, Reprieve's latest breakdown reveals that Kingdom continues to use the death penalty as a means to crack down on protesters, while concern grows for the number of vulnerable migrant workers executed for nonviolent drug offences.¹

'Vision 2030' = over 2,000 executions

Reprieve's calculations suggest that at the current rate, Saudi Arabia will have executed some **2,094** people by 2030.² The Kingdom has made much of its 'Vision 2030' plan, which it has advertised as a 'blueprint' for a new Saudi society that is 'effectively governed' and 'conscientious of human rights.'³

Non-violent alleged crimes

So far in 2017, Reprieve has found that a large proportion of those executed – some **41%** – have been convicted of nonviolent drug offences such as smuggling narcotics. This is despite recent calls by UN experts demanding a halt to executions for drug offences, in line with the international prohibition against the death penalty for drugs and non-violent crimes.⁴

Pakistanis disproportionately targeted

At least **23%** of those put to death in 2017 for drug offences were Pakistani nationals. The rate at which Pakistanis are being put to death is disproportionately large – Pakistanis are currently estimated to make up just **6%** of the overall Saudi population.⁵

There are particular concerns that many of those Pakistan nationals executed may have been victims of human trafficking, forced into smuggling drugs in their intestines. Saudi Arabia is a leading employer of Pakistani migrant workers, and reports of forced drug trafficking between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are coming to light.

Reprieve is aware of at least two Pakistani men who have been executed since 2015 after being offered 'jobs' in the Gulf Kingdom, and then tricked into carrying narcotics over the border.

¹ Figures as of June 1st 2017.

² Figures from 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2030.

³ Vision 2030 website: <http://vision2030.gov.sa/en/node/12>

⁴ UNOHCHR, 'Using the death penalty to fight drug crimes violates international law, UN rights experts warn World Day Against the Death Penalty':

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16581&LangID=E>

⁵ Based on population figures from the World Bank: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/saudi-arabia> and Pakistani government figures, available at: www.ophrd.gov.pk/default.aspx

Executions as a means to crush dissent

The Kingdom recorded the highest rate of executions in 2015 and 2016, amidst a sustained campaign by the government targeting peaceful protesters and activists, under the guise of counterterrorism legislation.

This crackdown coincides with Kingdom carrying its first mass execution in years on 2 January 2016, executing 47 people in just one day for so called “terrorism” offences. However, among those executed were juveniles and peaceful protesters, in clear violation of the prohibition against the death penalty for children.

Saudi Arabia continues to use death sentences as a means of thwarting peaceful expression: juveniles Ali al Nimr, Dawood al Marhoon and Abdullah al Zaher, who were arrested in the wake of protests, remain at risk of execution.

In May 2017 – days after the first visit to Riyadh by President Donald Trump – the Saudi Specialized Criminal Court upheld several death sentences handed down to protestors, including disabled man Munir Adam.⁶ The move follows a pause, of several months, during which there were no protester-related death sentences or executions. These latest developments raise concerns that the US President’s visit – where human rights were not mentioned – has emboldened the Kingdom’s leaders to resume the worst abuses.

The figures:

- Executions per year

Year	Executions
2017	39 ⁷
2016	154
2015	157
2014	88
Total	438⁸

- Executions by offence – 2014 - 2017

Offence	Executions
Smuggling narcotics	145
Murder	230
Murder/Rape or Sexual Assault	2
Kidnap/Rape	11
Kidnap/attempted rape	1
Adultery	1
Sorcery	1
Terrorism	47
Total	438

⁶ Reprieve, May 25th May 2017, ‘Saudi Arabia upholds death sentence for deaf, tortured protester’: www.reprieve.org.uk/press/10867/

⁷ Projected total for 2017 = 94

⁸ Projected total executions between 2014 and 2018 = 493

- Executions by offence – 2014

Offence	Executions
Smuggling narcotics	42
Murder	41
Murder/Rape or Sexual Assault	2
Kidnap/Rape	2
Kidnap/attempted rape	0
Adultery	0
Sorcery	1
Terrorism	0
Total	88

- Executions by offence – 2015

Offence	Executions
Smuggling narcotics	64
Murder	87
Murder/Rape or Sexual Assault	0
Kidnap/Rape	5
Kidnap/attempted rape	0
Adultery	1
Sorcery	0
Terrorism	0
Total	157

- Executions by offence – 2016

Offence	Executions
Smuggling narcotics	23
Murder	82
Murder/Rape or Sexual Assault	0
Kidnap/Rape	1
Kidnap/attempted rape	1
Adultery	0
Sorcery	0
Terrorism	47
Total	154

- Executions by offence – 2017

Offence	Executions
Smuggling narcotics	16
Murder	20
Murder/Rape or Sexual Assault	0
Kidnap/Rape (including of a child)	3
Kidnap/attempted rape	0
Adultery	0
Sorcery	0

Terrorism	0
Total	39

- Executions by nationality

Nationality	2017	2016	2015	2014	Total
Saudi Arabia	28	118	85	51	279
Pakistan	9	9	23	21	61
Yemen	0	10	11	2	23
Syria	1	1	13	7	22
Jordan	1	4	4	0	9
Ethiopia	0	3	2	1	6
Chad	0	1	3	0	4
Egypt	0	3	1	0	4
Iran	0	0	3	1	4
India	0	0	2	1	3
Iraq	0	1	1	1	3
Sri Lanka	0	0	3	0	3
Eritrea	0	1	1	0	2
Indonesia	0	0	2	0	2
Philippines	0	0	1	1	2
Nepal	0	0	0	1	1
Nigeria	0	1	0	0	1
Qatar	0	1	0	0	1
Sudan	0	0	1	0	1
Turkey	0	0	0	1	1
Bangladesh	0	1	0	0	1
Myanmar	0	0	1	0	1
Total	39	154	157	88	438