Saudi Arabia executions spike in 2019 – with 134 crucified and beheaded including six who were kids when arrested

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<https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/9935530/saudi-arabia-executions-increase-134-crucified-beheaded/>

Saudi Arabia has brutally executed 134 people so far this year, including six who were kids when they were arrested.

The slain were tortured and slaughtered by brutal methods – including crucifixion and beheading, according to a human rights organisation.

The “alarming rise” in state executions comes despite Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's pledge to reduce the use of the death penalty.

In a report presented at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, The Death Penalty Project revealed a further 24 people are at “imminent risk” of execution.

They include three children, prominent political opponents of the crown prince, clerics, and human rights campaigners.

At least six teens were executed this year after being arrested for supposed "crimes" when they were kids, the report claims.

An event hosted by The Death Penalty Project highlighted the “illegal and arbitrary executions” in Saudi Arabia as well as human rights abuses for both detainees and their families.

Experts said these abuses have been "exacerbated by the systematic torture of detainees and grossly unfair trials culminating in death sentences".

Among those executed this year are three women and 51 who were facing drug charges that would be considered minor offences elsewhere in the world.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

At least 58 of those killed were foreign nationals and most were accused of spreading Shia Islam - a crime in the Sunni Arab state.

There were 21 Pakistanis, 15 Yemenis, five from Syria and four from Egypt.

Two Jordanians, two Nigerians, a Somalian and two from unidentified nations were also included in the figures.

On April 22, a horrific mass execution was carried out by the savage regime involving 37 men being killed.

One was crucified and another had his head impaled on a spike.

Those killed during the beheading bloodbath had all been convicted of "terrorism offences" in the hardline kingdom.

TEENS SLAUGHTERED

One of those beheaded was Abdulkareem al-Hawaj, who was arrested while attending an anti-government protest when he was aged just 16.

He was convicted of being a "terrorist" in a trial branded a "farce" by Amnesty International.

He had his head cut from his body in front of a baying, bloodthirsty crowd along with 36 other men in the medieval country.

At least one of the bodies were reportedly crucified and put out on display after the execution.

Sentencing a person to death who is aged under 18 is banned under international law.

'SHAM TRIAL'

Another victim, Mujtaba al-Sweikat, was a teenager who was set to start a new life in the US, studying at Western Michigan University, when he was arrested for attending an anti-government protest.

The then-17-year-old – who had enrolled in English language and finance - was badly beaten including on the soles of his feet before he “confessed” to crimes against the state.

Human rights charities claim he was also tortured into confessing and convicted in a "sham trial."

The alarming figures come despite Bin Salman's pledge to "minimise" the use of capital punishment.

In an interview with Time magazine in 2018 he said: "There are a few areas we can change (or lower the sentence) from execution to life imprisonment.

"So we are working for two years through the government and also the Saudi parliament to build new laws in that area.

"And we believe it will take one year, maybe a little bit more, to have it finished... We will not get it 100 per cent, but to reduce it big time."