**Saudis execute 153 in 2016**

January 1, 2017

By AFP

Guardian

http://guardian.ng/news/saudi-executes-153-in-2016/

Saudi Arabia carried out 153 executions in 2016, according to an AFP tally based on official announcements, slightly down from the year before.

The ultra-conservative kingdom is one of the world’s most prolific executioners and has a strict Islamic legal code under which murder, drug trafficking, armed robbery, rape and apostasy are all punishable by death.

Rights group Amnesty International said Saudi Arabia carried out at least 158 death sentences in 2015, coming third after Iran and Pakistan.

Amnesty’s figures do not include secretive China.

Murder and drug trafficking cases account for the majority of Saudi executions, although 47 people were put to death for “terrorism” offences on a single day in January.

They included prominent Shiite cleric Nimr al-Nimr, whose execution prompted Iranian protesters to torch Saudi diplomatic missions, leading Riyadh to sever relations.