

# UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

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**Head of state:** Al-Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan

**Head of government:** Al-Sheikh Maktum bin Rashid al-Maktum

**Capital:** Abu Dhabi

**Population:** 2.6 million

**Official language:** Arabic

**Death penalty:** retentionist

**2000 treaty ratifications/signatures:** Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

**At least 15 death sentences and 18 flogging sentences were reportedly handed down during 2000, although the true figures may have been higher. At least two death sentences were commuted, while five others were upheld on appeal. There were no reported executions.**

## Background

The authorities announced a crack-down on drug offenders, following a reported 60 per cent rise in drug-related offences during 1999. Twelve of the 15 death sentences handed down in 2000 were for drug-related offences.

## Death sentences

At least 15 people, all foreign nationals, were sentenced to death during the year. Among them was Kartini bint Karim, an Indonesian national, who was sentenced in February by a *Shari'a* (Islamic) court in the Emirate of Fujairah to be stoned to death, reportedly after she had confessed to adultery (see below).

During the year, appeal courts in Dubai upheld five death sentences. In March, the death sentences against two men, originally handed down in 1997 for drug-related offences, were upheld. In April the death sentence against an Afghan national, originally handed down in January for drug-related offences, was also upheld. In June, the death sentence against a Pakistan national, originally handed down in February for drug-related offences, was upheld. In July, the death sentence previously passed on an Indian national for murder was also upheld.

## Commutation of death sentences

The sentence of stoning to death against Kartini bint Karim was commuted on appeal in April to one year's imprisonment and deportation. During her appeal, Kartini bint Karim reportedly denied confessing to the offence of adultery. As she had already spent 10 months in prison when her sentence was commuted, under United Arab Emirates law this time was deducted from her one-year sentence, after which she was deported. The court also sentenced *in absentia* the man involved in the case, an Indian national who had fled the country, to one year's imprisonment.

In April there were reports that Khalid Al-Malla, a Pakistan national reportedly sentenced to death for murder at the age of 14, was pardoned after having spent 10 years in detention in Ras al-Khaimah. His release and deportation reportedly followed the payment of blood money (*diya*) of approximately US\$45,000 to the murder victim's family.

## Cruel judicial punishments

At least 18 sentences of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishments such as flogging were passed during the year; 11 of them were handed down in the Emirate of Fujairah. Ten of the 18 sentences were allegedly for adultery and 11 of those sentenced were foreign nationals.

☞ In June a *Shari'a* court in Ras al-Khaimah reportedly sentenced Pakistan nationals Jamilah Rasul and Mohammad Ish'ar to 150 lashes and 90 lashes respectively, to be followed by prison terms and deportation, for adultery.

☞ In November, a *Shari'a* court in Fujairah reportedly sentenced Pifatool Karima, an Indonesian national, to 120 lashes and 14 months' imprisonment, to be followed by deportation, for adultery.

## Freedom of expression

In September there were unconfirmed reports that the Ministry of Information had made a number of rulings resulting in several academics and journalists being banned from writing or publishing materials in the media. The rulings also reportedly required newspaper publishers to obtain ministerial permission before they could employ columnists to write for their newspapers. Several radio and television programs were also reportedly suspended in Abu Dhabi.

