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Kuwait: Five hanged as Kuwait continues execution spree into second year

Responding to the hanging of five people by the Kuwaiti authorities yesterday including one convicted of a drug-related offence, Rawya Rageh, Amnesty International's Interim Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa, said:

“The Kuwaiti government has now executed a dozen people in less than a year, claiming a to be ‘tough on crime’ approach that panders to people’s worst instincts. The execution of one man for a drug-related offence violates international law which prohibits the use of the death penalty for such an offence.

It is deeply disappointing that Kuwait has returned to executions with such vigour and particularly when they had paused executions for five years starting 2017.

There is no credible evidence that such executions by the state have a greater deterrent effect on crimes than prison terms. Amnesty International calls on the Kuwaiti authorities to immediately establish an official moratorium on executions with a view to abolishing the death penalty.”

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Background

Kuwait's Office of Public Prosecution **announced on Twitter** on 27 July that the five executed were: Abdul-Aziz al-Mutairi, a Kuwaiti national convicted of premeditated murder; Gamal Ibrahim, an Egyptian national convicted of premeditated murder; Ahmad Shibrim, described only as “an illegal resident” and convicted of premeditated murder; Abdul-Rahman Saud, also described only as “an illegal resident” and convicted of facilitating logistics for the 26 June 2015 suicide bombing of the Shia Imam al-Sadeq mosque in Kuwait City, which killed 26 people and injured over 200 and was claimed by Islamic State; and Jodi Ravindra, a Sri Lankan convicted of “possessing with intent to traffic and use intoxicating and mind-altering drugs”. The term “illegal resident” is officially used by Kuwait to describe the country's native stateless population, known colloquially as the Bidun.

Kuwait did not carry out executions from January 2017 until 16 November 2022, when it executed seven people – four Kuwaiti men, a Syrian man, a Pakistani man, and an Ethiopian woman – **claiming** that this would deter crime.

The executions in Kuwait are part of a disturbing upward trend in executions by the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council in recent years. Saudi Arabia has **executed** over 50 people so far in 2023, including for drug-related offences. Bahrain resumed executions in 2017 after halting them for over six years and has executed six people since the resumption.

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