

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS TIMES

**MAN BEHEADED FOR SORCERY,
WITCHCRAFT IN SAUDI ARABIA**

by

Jacey Fortin

19 June 2012

<http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/354044/20120619/man-executed-witchcraft-sorcery-beheaded-saudi-arabia.htm>

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On Tuesday, Muree bin Ali Issa al-Asiri was beheaded in Saudi Arabia on charges of "witchcraft" and "sorcery." He also "admitted committing adultery with two women," according to a statement from the Saudi Press Agency.

Asiri was charged after mystical books and talismans were allegedly found in his possession.

Human rights organizations have criticized Saudi Arabia's persecution of alleged "sorcerers"; a similar execution took place just last December after a Saudi woman was charged with witchcraft.

In the conservative Islamic country of Saudi Arabia, there is no official criminal code, according to Al Jazeera. Instead, the justice system adheres to Islamic sharia law. Inconsistencies are endemic, since case-by-case interpretations of the law are left up to individual judges.

Amnesty International reports that executions in the country have been on the rise in recent years. On the same day Asiri was executed for sorcery, three more were also beheaded for other crimes.

<http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/354044/20120619/man-executed-witchcraft-sorcery-beheaded-saudi-arabia.htm>

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**SAUDI WOMAN BEHEADED FOR
PRACTICING 'WITCHCRAFT AND SORCERY'**

by

Nadine DeNinno

14 December 2011

<http://www.ibtimes.com/articles/267019/20111214/saudi-woman-beheaded-practicing-witchcraft-sorcery.htm>

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A Saudi woman, Amina bint Abdulhalim Nassar, was beheaded after national security convicted her of practicing "witchcraft and sorcery."

The Saudi Interior Ministry executed Nassar on Monday in al-Jawf after authorities found evidence in the woman's home. The Saudi Supreme Judicial Court upheld the execution sentence after it was appealed in court, as conservative clerics believe healers to be a threat to Islam.

Left - A Saudi woman, Amina bint Abdulhalim Nassar, was beheaded Monday after national security convicted her of practicing "witchcraft and sorcery."

Authorities reported they found a book about witchcraft, 35 veils and glass bottles of potions "used for sorcery" in the woman's home. The woman claimed to be a healer and would charge 1500 riyals, or \$400, for a veil and three bottles of the unknown liquid to heal her customers.

Al-Hayat, a British newspaper, said the 60-year-old woman used to trick people into believing she could heal them so she can get her money.

While the ministry did not give details of the charges the woman faced, Philip Luther, the interim director of Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa program, said charges of sorcery from the Saudi government is usually a cover-up excuse in order to punish a person for freedom of speech.

"The charges of 'witchcraft and sorcery' are not defined as crimes in Saudi Arabia and to use them to subject someone to the cruel and extreme penalty of execution is truly appalling," Luther said in a statement.

Nassar is the second person to be executed for witchcraft this year in Saudi Arabia; A Sudanese man was decapitated by sword in September in Medina for a similar crime. In total, as many as 79 people have been executed this year in Saudi Arabia, according to Amnesty International.

Amnesty International, which had campaigned for the Sudanese man executed in September, told BBC they hadn't heard of this case, though she is believed to have been arrested in 2009.

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