

Capital punishment is practised in Saudi Arabia for serious crimes such as murder, rape and drug smuggling. Executions, which may be effected by firing squad, beheading or stoning, increased during the 1990's. Repeated convictions for theft result in the amputation of the right hand. The Saudi's failure to respect the principles of fair trial and due process of law are a particular area of concern.

A good deal of genuine support continues to exist in Saudi Arabia for these and other strict interpretations of Islamic law and the prevailing trend is toward even greater influence of Islam on the direction of government and society. A quasi-official Religious Police (the "Mutawwaen") is granted broad licence to enforce public morality.

### CANADIAN POSITION

Canada's approach recognizes that deeply-held traditional attitudes cannot be changed overnight. For social change to occur in Saudi society in a stable fashion, it must of necessity be implemented gradually.

The Saudi Government is expected to continue to move very cautiously in these areas. Over time, it is likely to be the attraction and pervasive influence of Western systems of education which will make the greatest impact for social change and religious liberalization. Canada is playing a role in this area by promoting studies in Canada by young Saudis.

In the meantime, Canada continues to raise human rights issues of concern with the Government of Saudi Arabia in both bilateral and multilateral fora. Canadian consular staff in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia make representations on behalf of Canadian citizens regarding mistreatment by the Mutawwa and the regular police. In both Geneva and Riyadh, Canadian diplomatic officials encourage their Saudi counterparts to fully and constructively engage in the Commission on Human Rights process, where this year Saudi Arabia will again be considered under the confidential 1503 procedure.

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