

Saudi monarchy to behead more than fifty in political mass execution

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The Saudi monarchy planned to behead more than 50 alleged “Al Qaeda terrorists” on Friday. At least three of the prisoners scheduled for execution were “convicted” as children, according to Amnesty International. Many of the prisoners say that they were forced to confess while being tortured.

The execution of dozens of the Shi’a minority has clearly been ordered as a political move. “The Saudi Arabian authorities are using the guise of counter-terrorism to settle political scores,” Amnesty Middle East director James Lynch noted.

The Saudi regime faces a growing internal crisis that has become especially acute in recent months, after a stampede in September killed more than 2,000 during the annual Hajj pilgrimage in Mina, Mecca. Popular outrage over the incident was further inflamed by revelations that the stampede was triggered by the militarized entourage escorting the crown prince to the ceremony.

The stampede coincided with the emergence of a letter by an unnamed member of the royal family calling for a palace coup against King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and his clique of supporters.

The internal crisis is intensified by growing regional and geopolitical pressures, including the regional struggle of the Sunni-dominated Saudi government against the Shi’a regime in Iran. Iranian support for Shia elements, including the Houthi rebels that seized power in Yemen early this year, is a cause of major concern for Riyadh, which has responded with a ferocious air and ground war against Yemen.

Behind the sensational headlines produced by this year’s surge in beheadings by the regime, Riyadh has been waging a months-long war against Yemen, pummeling one of the poorest countries in the world with advanced missiles and bombs supplied by the US,

with barely a mention in the American media.

US logistics and intelligence personnel have organized the Saudi bombardment, which has killed at least 2,600 civilians and has devastated large areas of the country since beginning in March. At least 300 of those killed in the Saudi strikes were victims of flagrantly illegal operations targeting civilian areas, according to a new Human Rights Watch report. In 10 separate strikes examined by HRW, no military targets were found nearby. Neither Washington nor Riyadh has investigated a single incident of mass killing of civilians arising from the Yemen war, according to HRW.

The Saudi fear of Iranian-backed Shi’a forces applies within the boundaries of the kingdom itself. It is no coincidence that all of the victims of Friday’s executions were drawn from a town called Awamiyya, located in Saudi’s Eastern Province, a Shi’a-dominated area which is facing increasing repression by the regime.

So frequently highlighted by the US government and media, the number of beheadings carried out by Islamist extremist militias pales in comparison to those of Washington’s closest ally in the Middle East. The Saudi state has executed more than 150 people so far this year, surpassing the kingdom’s previous record for beheadings in a single year, set in 1995. The regime regularly files death penalty cases based on charges such as “sorcery,” adultery, apostasy and homosexuality.

While the Saudi regime may justify its actions by reference to forms of law rooted in the social relations of ancient slave and feudal societies, the underlying causes of its atrocities are firmly modern, being rooted in the structure of capitalist society and the imperialist world order that arises on its foundations. The crimes

of the Saudi monarchy ultimately flow from the domination of the region by Washington and the cultural and economic stagnation enforced by capitalist property and the nation-state system.



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