

Beat: News

Saudi Arabia beheads woman for killing stepdaughter

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USPA News - A Myanmar woman convicted of brutally raping and killing her seven-year-old stepdaughter has been decapitated by sword in Saudi Arabia, the kingdom's government reported on Monday, raising the number of people executed there so far this year to seven. Layla bint Abdul Mutaleb Bassim had previously been convicted of killing her husband's seven-year-old daughter, Kalthoum bint Abdul Rahman bin Ghulam Qadir, the interior ministry said in a statement.

It said both the woman and the child were nationals of Myanmar, though it did not specify whether they were from the heavily-persecuted Rohingya Muslim minority. According to the interior ministry, Bassim tormented the victim and beat her severely before anally raping her with a broomstick, "taking her virginity without mercy or pity, which led to her death." Bassim was convicted of the crime and sentenced to death due to the brutal nature of the crime, and both the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Judicial Council upheld the sentence. Bassim was beheaded on Monday in the holy city of Mecca. Monday's beheading adds to a surge in executions that began in August 2014, angering human rights organizations because many of those killed were convicted of non-lethal crimes. Four family members were all beheaded on the same day in August 2014 for merely possessing hashish, prompting outrage from human rights organizations. At least 87 people were executed in Saudi Arabia last year, following 79 executions in 2013. The kingdom applies the death penalty for a large number of crimes, including drug offenses, apostasy, sorcery and witchcraft. Both witchcraft and sorcery are not listed as crimes but have been used to prosecute people for exercising their right to freedom of speech or religion, according to activists.

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