

Saudi woman to be lashed for defying driving ban - a punishment overturned by the king

Sunday 2 October 2011, by [Amnesty International](#), [BBC](#), [JONES Sam](#) (Date first published: 27 September 2011).

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Saudi women will soon be allowed to vote but driving remains a banned activity

A court in Saudi Arabia has sentenced a woman to 10 lashes for breaking the country's ban on female drivers.

The woman, identified only as Shema, was found guilty of driving in Jeddah in July.

Women2drive, which campaigns for women to be allowed to drive in Saudi Arabia, says she has already lodged an appeal.

In recent months, scores of women have driven vehicles in Saudi cities in an effort to put pressure on the monarchy to change the law.

The sentence comes two days after the Saudi leader King Abdullah announced women would be allowed to vote for the first time in 2015.

Two other women are due to appear in court later this year on similar charges, correspondents say.

BBC

* *BBC News*, 27 September 2011 Last updated at 13:19 GMT
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-15079620>

Flogging sentence for Saudi Arabian woman after driving 'beggars belief'

Wednesday 28 September 2011 by siawi3

Saudi Arabian women face severe discrimination in many areas of their lives

27 September 2011

The sentencing of a Saudi Arabian woman to 10 lashes after she drove a car demonstrates the scale

of discrimination against women in the Kingdom, Amnesty International said today.

“Flogging is a cruel punishment in all circumstances but it beggars belief that the authorities in Saudi Arabia have imposed lashes on a woman apparently for merely driving a car,” said Amnesty International’s Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director Philip Luther.

“Belatedly allowing women to vote in council elections is all well and good, but if they are still going to face being flogged for trying to exercise their right to freedom of movement then the King’s much-trumpeted ‘reforms’ actually amount to very little.”

“Saudi Arabia needs to go much further. The whole system of women’s subordination to men in Saudi Arabia needs to be dismantled.”

The sentence was passed by a court in Jeddah today. Two other women are believed to be facing charges for driving, one in Jeddah and one in al-Khobar.

The Minister of Interior has formally banned women from driving in Saudi Arabia since 1990, when a group of women staged a driving protest to challenge a customary ban in place until then.

Earlier this year an online campaign called on women who hold international driving licences to start driving on Saudi Arabian roads.

The “Women2Drive” campaign has used Facebook and Twitter to encourage women to drive as part of their normal daily activities rather than converge in one place.

Corporal punishment, particularly flogging, is routinely imposed as a sentence by courts in Saudi Arabia.

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<http://amnesty.org/en/news-and-updates/flogging-sentence-saudi-arabian-woman-after-driving-beggars-belief-2011-09-27-0>

Saudi woman driver saved from lashes by 'king's pardon' !

Amnesty International

27 September 2011

A Saudi woman sentenced to be lashed 10 times for defying the country’s ban on female drivers has had her punishment overturned by the king.

The woman, named as Shaima Jastaina and believed to be in her 30s, was found guilty of driving without permission in Jeddah in July. Her case was the first in which a legal punishment was handed down for a violation of the ban in the ultraconservative Muslim nation.

Although there has been no official confirmation of the ruling, Princess Amira al-Taweel, wife of the Saudi Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, tweeted: “Thank God, the lashing of [Shaima] is cancelled. Thanks to our beloved king. I am sure all Saudi women will be so happy, I know I am.”

She later added that she and her husband had spoken to Shaima, who told them: "The king's orders washed the fears I lived with after this unjust sentence."

Jastaina was sentenced on Monday — a day after King Abdullah promised to protect women's rights and said women would be allowed to participate in municipal elections in 2015. He also promised to appoint women to the all-male Shura council advisory body.

The moves underline the challenge facing Abdullah, known as a reformer, as he pushes gently for change while trying not to antagonise the powerful clergy and a conservative segment of the population.

Although there are no written laws that restrict women from driving, the prohibition is rooted in conservative traditions and religious views that hold that giving freedom of movement to women would make them vulnerable to sins.

Police usually stop female drivers, question them and let them go after they sign a pledge not to drive again. But dozens of women have continued to take to the roads since June in a campaign to break the taboo.

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the world that bans women — both Saudi and foreign — from driving. The prohibition forces families to hire live-in drivers, and those who cannot afford the \$300-\$400 (£190-£255) a month for a driver must rely on male relatives to drive them.

Sam Jones and agencies

guardian.co.uk, Thursday 29 September 2011 08.24 BST

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/29/saudi-woman-lashing-king-abdullah>
