

Saudi court doubles lashes for rape victim

by UPI

JIDDA, Saudi Arabia - A Saudi court's decision increasing the number of lashes for a female rape victim is at the forefront of an examination of the Kingdom's strict Islamic law. A court originally sentenced a 19-year-old woman, known in Saudi media as "the Qatif girl," and her former boyfriend to 90 lashes each for being together out of wedlock in defiance of Saudi Arabian law. The case sparked a rare public debate on woman's rights when it was revealed later the couple had been kidnapped and gang-raped. The lawyer for the woman, Abdul-Rahman al-Lahem, appealed her sentence on the grounds the punishment for the seven men who raped her was too lenient, The New York Times reported Friday. The court returned the decision doubling the number of lashes the woman was to receive from 90 to 200, the newspaper said. "I don't agree with this judgment," Bassem Alim, a Saudi lawyer, said of the sentence. "I think it's overly severe." The judges also increased prison terms for the woman's attackers.

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