

Clemency sought in Saudi for Canadian

by UPI

OTTAWA -- Canadian Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day appealed to Saudi officials in Riyadh Wednesday for clemency for a Canadian sentenced to death. Officials in Day's office told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., the minister's Middle East tour included a meeting to seek clemency for Mohammed Kohail, who this month was sentenced to public beheading for his role in a school brawl last year in which a Saudi youth was killed. Spokeswoman Melisa Leclerc said Day would express Canada's displeasure with the sentence for the 23-year-old Montreal native. "Our government is deeply disappointed at the verdict handed down by Saudi authorities on March 3," Leclerc told the CBC. "Canada will pursue all avenues to assist Mr. Kohail. We urge Saudi authorities to overturn the death sentence." The sentence issued under Islamic Shariah law carries a 30-day window for appeal but Mahmoud Al-Ken, a friend of the Kohail family told CBC News that option didn't offer much hope. "If the court of appeal accepts the appeal and it goes through the regular system, the case will go back to the same judge and it's very unlikely the judge will reverse his own decision," he said.

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