

Elderly Saudi woman sentenced to lashings

by UPI

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia - A 75-year-old Saudi Arabian woman has been sentenced to receive 40 lashes for hosting two unrelated men in her house, local media reported.

The Saudi daily newspaper al-Watan said the woman, Khamisa Mohammed Sawadi, has appealed her sentence after being charged with offenses against Islam by the religious police, the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, CNN reported Monday.

Sawadi says the two men in her house were a man she considers her son because she breast-fed him as a baby and a friend who was escorting him as he delivered bread to the elderly woman.

"It's made everybody angry because this is like a grandmother," Saudi women's rights activist Wajeha Huwaidar told CNN. "Forty lashes -- how can she handle that pain? You cannot justify it."

The U.S. broadcaster reported that Saudi religious police last week also detained two male novelists for questioning after they approached a female writer, Halima Muzfar, for an autograph at a book fair in Riyadh.

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