

55 arrested during raid on “gay party” in Saudi Arabia

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Police in the Gulf kingdom of Saudi Arabia have launched another raid on a so-called gay party, this time in the coastal Qatif province.

Drugs, alcohol were reportedly found at the gathering.

TV channel al-Arabiya reports that two young men wearing women’s make up and dancing together were among 55 people arrested by religious police.

Last month more than 20 men after a raid on another property in Qatif.

Quantities of alcohol were seized at a gathering of young men. Many were initially arrested on homosexuality charges but later released.

The state Commission for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice was acting on a tip off.

In Saudi Arabia homosexuality is illegal under sharia, or Islamic Law.

The maximum sentence it carries is the death penalty and this is most commonly performed by public beheading.

Gay rights are not recognised in the kingdom and the publication of any material promoting them is banned for its “un-Islamic” themes.

With strict laws restricting unmarried opposite-sex couples, however, and public displays of affection accepted between men, some Westerners have suggested that sharia encourages homosexuality.

In April 2006 a court in Saudi Arabia sentenced two Saudis, one Yemeni and a Jordanian to two years in jail and 2,000 lashes after a police raid on an alleged gay party.

In October two men were publicly flogged in Saudi Arabia after being found guilty of sodomy and sentenced to 7,000 lashes.



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