

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 11/24/96

23 July 1996

Further information on UA 161/96 (MDE 11/20/96, 1 July 1996) - Death penalty / Legal concern

**BAHRAIN'Ali Ahmad Abed al-Usfur, aged 31, employee in the agriculture ministry
Yousef Hussein 'Abdelbaki, aged 31, teacher
Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim al-Kattab, aged 30, employee in aluminium company**

Attempts to bring the three men named above to the Court of Cassation have failed and Amnesty International fears that their execution is imminent. The organization has also received further information confirming that their trial by the State Security Court fell far short of international standards for fair trial.

Although the State Security Court does not allow for appeal, under Bahraini law death sentences by ordinary courts are automatically referred to the Court of Cassation for appeal. However, when the defence lawyers invoked that law in an attempt to go to the Court of Cassation, the government of Bahrain denied them that right and strongly indicated that the death sentences could be implemented soon.

Amnesty International has also learned that the defendants' confessions, read out in court, apparently strongly contradicted one another. The State Security Court did not take into account these discrepancies, and neither did it require a cross-examination of the defendants, relying solely on written confessions they had made during the interrogation. The organization fears that the defendants may have been convicted on the basis of confessions extracted under torture. The court has also denied the team of defence lawyers their right to read the reasons for the judgement.

Amnesty International is also concerned that the trial *in camera* by the State Security Court proceeds to a decision at a fast pace which does not allow lawyers sufficient time to prepare a defence.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life, and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On 26 March 1996, the authorities carried out the first execution in Bahrain for nearly 20 years when Issa Ahmad Hassan Qambar was executed by firing squad. He had been convicted of murdering a police sergeant.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- expressing deep concern that 'Ali Ahmad Abed al-Usfur, Yousef Hussein Abdelbaki and Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim al-Kattab have been denied the right to appeal against their death sentences and urging that the sentences be commuted;
- expressing concern that the trial did not meet internationally recognized standards for fair trial, and that the convictions may have been based on confessions extracted under torture;
- explaining your opposition to the death penalty in all cases and all countries on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and pointing out that there is no evidence that it deters crime more effectively than other punishments.

Please bring to the attention of section home government lobbyists.

APPEALS TO:

His Highness
Shaikh 'Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
Office of His Highness the Amir
PO Box 555
The Amiri Court
Rifa'a Palace, Bahrain
Telexes: 8666 Qasar BN; 8500 Qasar BN
Telegrams: His Highness the Amir, al-Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 668884
Salutation: Your Highness

His Excellency
Shaikh Muhammad Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa
Minister of Interior
PO Box 13, al-Manama, Bahrain
Telexes: 9572 PSMKT BN or 7889 PMPO BN
Telegrams: Minister of Interior, al-Manama, Bahrain
Faxes: +973 276765 or 2905526
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency
Shaikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa
Prime Minister
PO Box 1000, al-Manama, Bahrain
Telexes: 9336 PROM BN or 7889 PMPO BN
Telegrams: Prime Minister, al-Manama, Bahrain
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Bahrain accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 September 1996.