

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 11/26/96

28 October 1996

Further information on UA 161/96 (MDE 11/20/96, 1 July 1996) and follow-up (MDE 11/24/96, 23 July) - 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-Kattan, aged 30, employee in aluminium company

The three men named above remain at imminent risk of execution after the Court of Cassation, meeting in a brief session on 27 October 1996, reportedly ruled that it had no jurisdiction over the State Security Court's verdict of 1 July, when the three were originally sentenced to death. The sentences will now pass to the Amir, Shaikh 'Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, for ratification.

The three were convicted of carrying out a firebomb attack on an Asian restaurant on 14 March 1996, in which seven Bangladeshi nationals were killed. Amnesty International has received information indicating that their trial by the State Security Court fell far short of international standards for fair trial (see previous update). 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.

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, 'Issa Ahmad Hassan Qambar was executed in the first execution in Bahrain for nearly 20 years. He had been convicted of murdering a police sergeant (see UA 162/95, MDE 11/13/95, 6 July 1995 and updates).

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

- expressing sympathy for the victims of crime and their families, acknowledging the right of governments to bring those responsible for criminal acts to justice, but expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty;
- expressing concern that the trial of 'Ali Ahmad Abed al-'Usfur, Yousef Hussein 'Abdelbaki and Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim al-Kattan did not meet internationally recognized standards for fair trial, and that the convictions may have been based on confessions extracted under torture;
- expressing concern at the decision of the Court of Cassation not to review the State Security Court's verdict in this case;
- urging that the death sentences be commuted.

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

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Telegrams: His Highness the Amir, al-Manama, Bahrain

Faxes: +973 668884

Salutation: Your Highness

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 15 December 1996.