

AI INDEX: MDE 11/27/96  
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BAHRAIN: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL APPEALS AGAINST IMMINENT  
EXECUTIONS AFTER UNFAIR TRIAL

Amnesty International is urgently calling on the Amir of Bahrain, Shaikh 'Issa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, to commute the death sentences of three men who could be executed at any moment.

The Court of Cassation, meeting in a brief session on 27 October, reportedly ruled that it had no jurisdiction to review the State Security Court's verdict of 1 July which sentenced to death 'Ali Ahmad Abd al-'Usfur, aged 31, employee in the Ministry of Agriculture; Youssef Hussein 'Abd al-Baqi, aged 31, teacher, and Ahmad Khalil Ibrahim al-Kattan, aged 30, an employee in an aluminium company. The sentences will now pass to the Amir for ratification. The three men were convicted of carrying out a firebomb attack on an Asian restaurant on 14 March 1996, in which seven Bangladeshi nationals were killed.

“We sympathise with the victims of crime and their families -- and acknowledge the right of the Bahraini Government to bring the perpetrators to justice -- the death penalty has never been shown to deter crimes more effectively than any other punishment but merely brutalises all those involved,” Amnesty International said today.

The three men were tried by the State Security Court whose procedures fall far short of international standards for fair trial. Amnesty International is concerned that their convictions may have been based on confessions extracted under torture. The State Security Court procedures provide for no right of appeal, however, 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.

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.

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EMBARGOED FOR 11:00 AM EDT

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**LEAKED DOCUMENTS POINT TO U.S. WEAPONS MEANT FOR DRUG WAR USED  
TO KILL INNOCENT PEOPLE IN COLOMBIA**

*Amnesty International USA Calls for Ban on Arms Transfers to Colombia*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** -- Documents leaked to Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) now confirm that almost every Colombian military unit highlighted by the organization as known to be murdering Colombian civilians was doing so with US supplied weapons. In light of this new information, the organization has called for an immediate suspension of US military assistance to Colombia -- particularly a pending \$40 million arms shipment and Blackhawk helicopters -- until the Administration puts forth a plan to prevent the recurrence of such atrocities and fully discloses past and intended recipients of US aid.

In a press conference today, Dr. William F. Schulz, the organization's executive director, released documents obtained from a US official "deeply troubled by US policy in Colombia" that refuted longstanding claims by the Clinton Administration that US aid to Colombia was not being used to commit atrocities. "Before the US government can consider any military aid to Colombia, the Clinton Administration must offer a plan to prevent further atrocities with US arms and fully disclose past and intended recipients of US aid," Dr. Schulz said.

The three leaked documents consisted of a Department of Defense, US Southern Command, dated April 8, 1994 - three weeks after AIUSA first publicized its concerns regarding human rights violations committed by Colombian forces using US arms -- from Colonel Warren D. Hall III, Staff Judge Advocate, to then Commander in Chief General Barry McCaffrey, now the Administration's "drug czar." Colonel Hall had apparently investigated AIUSA's concerns, found the "command's legal/political liability [to be] slight" and outlined established procedures to prevent US aid from going to units with bad human rights records. Subsequent investigation by the US government -- now leaked to Amnesty International -- show that Colonel Hall's analysis was wrong and the procedures listed failed catastrophically.

The second document is a list of Colombian units documented by Amnesty International and submitted to then Acting Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters, Ambassador Arcos, which is annotated by hand with what appear to be the locations of the various units. The third and potentially most important document is entitled "Equipment Acquired Through US Grants" and contains a list of the very same Colombian military brigades on the Amnesty list along with a detailed description of the US-supplied military equipment they had received. The third document appears on blank stationary but lists only the brigades AIUSA mentioned, including one which received no US equipment.

"All but one of the units about which we expressed concern received US military assistance contrary to denials from the Administration to Amnesty and Congress over the past two years,"

Dr. Schulz said. "US weapons that were ostensibly to fight drugs instead may have equipped thugs in uniforms who murdered people inconvenient to the Colombian government."  
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