

EXTRA 47/96

Death Penalty

29 March 1996

**EGYPT Ashraf Youssef Ibrahim: sentenced to death****'Awda Mohammad Mohsin: sentenced to death****Mohammad Khalaf Ahmad: sentenced to death**

---

The three people named above have been sentenced to death in Egypt in separate cases over the past two weeks. This brings the number of people sentenced to death in Egypt in 1996, as recorded by Amnesty International, to 15. To date, three people, sentenced in previous years, have been executed.

In the first case, Ashraf Youssef Ibrahim, a manual labourer, was sentenced to death by a criminal court in Qena on 14 March 1996 after having been convicted of the murder of his father. In the second case, 'Awda Mohammad Mohsin, aged 22, was sentenced to death on 15 March 1996 by a Cairo criminal court for trading and dealing in heroin. In the third case, on 21 March 1996, a criminal court in Cairo sentenced Mohammad Khalaf Ahmad, aged 27, to death for the murder of a taxi driver.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The death penalty is applied in Egypt for criminal offenses such as drug use or trafficking and murder. Dozens of people have been sentenced to death in Egypt for such crimes. It is also applied for offenses related to "terrorism".

The death penalty has been increasingly applied in such cases since President Hosni Mubarak began issuing special decrees referring civilians to be tried by military courts in October 1992: 70 death sentences have been passed by military courts since that date and 48 executions have now been carried out.

Death sentences in criminal cases are submitted to the Mufti, the highest religious authority in the country, for approval. This is a routine measure, as he approves the vast majority of them. They are then passed on to the President or his nominee for ratification. The death sentences issued by military courts are subject to ratification by the President of the Republic, and then review by the Military Appeals Bureau, also headed by the President of the Republic.

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

- expressing concern that the three people mentioned above have been sentenced to death and urging that the President use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute these and other pending death sentences;
- expressing concern at the upsurge in the use of the death penalty in Egypt, and explaining Amnesty International's opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the most extreme form of cruel and inhuman punishment;
- point out that the organization does not in any way condone the crimes such as those of which the three people above were convicted, and recognizes the right of states to bring criminals to justice; however, stress that there is no evidence that the death penalty is an effective deterrent to such crimes;
- drawing attention to world trends to abolish or reduce the use of the death penalty, in accordance with Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak  
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt  
Telegrams: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt  
**Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Ms Nayla Gabr  
The Human Rights Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt  
Faxes: (20 2)574 7839

Dr Fathi Sorour  
Speaker  
The People's Assembly  
Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 April 1996.