

EXTERNAL

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Death Penalty

21 April 1997

**EGYPT** Ibrahim 'Abd al-Tawwab Bahgat, taxi driver  
'Abd al-Hakim Ra'id Mohammad, taxi-driver  
Gamal Mohammad al-Sayyid, unemployed

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Ibrahim 'Abd al-Tawwab Bahgat, 'Abd al-Hakim Ra'id Mohammad and Gamal Mohammad al-Sayyid were sentenced to death on 14 April 1997 by the Cairo Criminal Court, after being found guilty of murder. Their sentences have now been passed on to the *Mufti*, the highest religious authority in the country, for approval.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty is applied in Egypt for criminal offences 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 offences related to "terrorism".

The death penalty has been increasingly used in such cases since President Hosni Mubarak began issuing special decrees referring civilians to be tried by military courts in October 1992: 74 death sentences have been passed by military courts since that date and 54 executions have now been carried out.

Death sentences in criminal cases are submitted to the *Mufti* 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. Final verdicts by criminal courts can be appealed against before the Court of Cassation only when it can be proved that there were procedural irregularities in the trial. 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/express/airmail letters in Arabic, English, French, or your own language:

- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime for which Ibrahim 'Abd al-Tawwab Bahgat, 'Abd al-Hakim Ra'id Mohammad and Gamal Mohammad al-Sayyid were convicted, but explaining your opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life, pointing out that it has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect and is brutalizing to all involved in its application;
- urging the President to use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute the death sentence against these three men, and all other pending death sentences;
- 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 TO:

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Ms Nayla Gabr  
The Human Rights Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt  
**Faxes: (20 2) 574 9667**  
**E-mail: mofal@idsc.gov.eg**

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 5 June 1997.