

UA 348/00

Fear of T**EGYPT**Yusri Ahmad Muhammad, surgeon, aged about 50
His wife and seven children

Yusri Ahmad Muhammad was forcibly returned to Egypt from Kuwait on 9 November, with his wife and children. It is feared that he is held at a State Security Investigations (SSI) Department facility, where torture is common.

Yusri Ahmad Muhammad is married with seven children, six girls and one boy. His wife and children's whereabouts are now unknown, and it is feared that they too may be in custody.

The family had been legally resident in Kuwait since 1982. Yusri Ahmad Muhammad, who was working as a surgeon for the Kuwait National Petroleum Company in Kuwait City, was arrested on 6 November 2000. He was held in a detention centre in Kuwait City along with three Kuwaitis and other foreign nationals. According to press reports, Yusri Ahmad Muhammad and the others were accused of affiliation with Islamist armed groups.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Torture of political detainees is common in Egypt, in SSI branches, police stations and occasionally prisons. Detainees' relatives are sometimes taken into custody to put further pressure on them.

The most common methods of torture reported are: electric shocks, beatings, suspension by the wrists or ankles, burning with cigarettes, and various forms of psychological torture, including death threats and threats of rape or sexual abuse of the detainee or their female relatives. Although lawyers and local human rights groups have filed hundreds of complaints of torture with the Public Prosecutor's Office, no impartial investigations are known to have been conducted.

The UN Committee Against Torture recommended "that Egypt takes effective measures to prevent torture in police and SSI custody" in May 1999.

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

- seeking assurances that if detained, Yusri Ahmad Muhammad and his family are humanely treated and that they are given regular access to a lawyer of their choice and to their relatives;
- asking that they be released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- reminding the Egyptian authorities of their commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt

Telegram: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt

E-mail: webmaster@presidency.gov.eg

Fax: + 202 390 1998

Telex: 93794 WAZRA UN

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency General Habib al-'Adeli
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Telegram: Minister Interior, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: + 202 579 2031
E-mail: moi2@idsc.gov.eg
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Ms Shadia Farag
The Human Rights Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: + 202 574 9533

Dr Fathi Sorour
Speaker, The People's Assembly, Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: + 202 574 9175

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 22 December 2000.