

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 15/23/96

EXTRA 44/96

Death penalty

21 March 1996

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Matter al-Shubeki

Salah al-Shubeki

Wa'el al-Shubeki

Ma'mun 'Attalla

On 20 March 1996, Matter al-Shubeki, Salah al-Shubeki and Wa'el al-Shubeki, cousins in their 20s, were sentenced to death by hanging by a three-judge Criminal Court in Gaza. They were convicted of killing a 50-year-old Palestinian moneychanger, 'Abdallah Shedada, and stealing from him in Gaza City on 29 February 1996. The three pleaded guilty to the murder charge. They have 10 days to file an appeal.

Ma'mun 'Attalla, the fourth defendant, pleaded not guilty to the murder charge. He was convicted of being an accessory and was sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour. However, Khaled al-Qidrah, Attorney-General in the Palestinian Authority, said that prosecutors would appeal against the sentence and would ask a higher court to sentence Ma'mun 'Attalla to death as well.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Five death sentences have been imposed over the last 10 days in the Palestinian Authority. However, Amnesty International welcomes the news that the death sentences passed on 'Attiya Abu Nuqayreh and Ala' 'Akel (see EXTRA 39/96, MDE 15/19/96, 13 March 1996) were commuted on 21 March 1996. The case of Tha'er Fares, a policeman sentenced to death by a Military Court having been convicted of murder (see EXTRA 50/95, MDE 15/14/95, 5 May 1995), still remains. Yasser Arafat has not ratified his death sentence, and he remains held in prison.

Amnesty International fully recognizes the right and responsibility of authorities to bring to justice those who have committed crimes. However, the organization opposes the death penalty without reservation as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

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

- stating that you in no way condone crimes of violence but that you oppose the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life;
- urging that the death sentences passed on Matter al-Shubeki, Salah al-Shubeki and Wa'el al-Shubeki be commuted;
- urging that Ma'mun 'Attalla should not be sentenced to death;
- welcoming the commuting of the death sentences passed on 'Attiya Abu Nuqayreh and Ala' 'Akel and urging the Palestinian Authority, in line with world trends against the use of the death penalty, to abolish the death penalty and to ensure that any new penal code excludes the death penalty as a punishment for both civilians and military.

APPEALS TO:

1. President Yasser Arafat
Palestinian Authority
Al-Muntada
Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Faxes: +972 7 822 365 (ask to send a fax)

Telegrams: President Arafat, Palestinian Authority, Gaza, Via Israel
Salutation: Dear President Arafat

2. Minister of Justice Mr Freih Abu Meddein
Ministry of Justice
Abu Khadra Building
Omar al-Mukhtar Street
Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Faxes: +972 7 822 236

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Gaza, Palestinian Authority, Gaza, via Israel

Salutation: Dear Minister

3. Khaled al-Qidrah
Attorney-General
Attorney-General Building
Yarmouk, Gaza,
Palestinian Authority

Faxes: +972 7 822 388

Telegrams: Attorney-General, Palestinian Authority, Gaza, via Israel

Salutation: Dear Mr al-Qidrah

COPIES TO:

Dr Iyad al-Sarraj
Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights
Ritz Hotel
Ibn Khaldun Street
PO Box 54627
Jerusalem
Via Israel

Fax: +972 2 28 28 69

and to diplomatic representatives of Palestinian Authority accredited to your country. **DO NOT COPY YOUR LETTERS TO ISRAELI DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES IN YOUR COUNTRY.**

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 April 1996.