

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 16/04/95

4 August 1995

Further information on UA 451/94 (MDE 16/06/94, 22 December 1994) and follow-up (MDE 16/01/95 30 March 1995) - Death Penalty

JORDAN Abdullah Hashaikeh

Isma'il al-'Amayra, 28

Zakharia Qassem, 23

Muhammad 'Ali 'Issa, 25

Muhammad Ahmad al-'Atharba, 25

Suleiman 'Abd al-'Aal, 22

Samir Taylakh, 23

Yassin Zahra, 20

Muhammad Ahmad al-Harithi, Omani in absentia

Yahya 'Uwaydat Muhammad al-Shawarkah, Jordanian in absentia

Hamed Jamal Khalifah, Saudi in absentia

On 19 July 1995, the State Security Court issued its verdict in the review of the "Arab Afghan" case. Hamed Jamal Khalifa, a Saudi national, who was sentenced to death *in absentia* in December 1994, was acquitted due to insufficient evidence. However, the death sentences imposed on the other 10 defendants were confirmed by the State Security Court. The death sentences will automatically be reviewed once more by the Court of Cassation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 11 defendants, out of a group of 25 tried, were sentenced to death by the State Security Court on 21 December 1994. Charges included plotting to overthrow the government, and bombings. Some 16 of the defendants had retracted confessions which they claim to have made as a result of torture, all the defendants had pleaded innocent at the start of the trial. Death sentences in Jordan are automatically reviewed by the Court of Cassation and then must be ratified by the King.

The Court of Cassation reviewed the 11 death sentences on 29 March, but returned the cases to the State Security Court, as it found evidence which had not been taken into account.

During 1994 Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed its concerns to the Jordanian authorities about the increase in the use of the death penalty. At least seven executions have taken place this year with at least 12 executions during 1993, the highest number for two decades. Others remain on death row.

Amnesty International does not condone crimes of violence, and recognizes the responsibility of governments to bring the perpetrators to justice. However, it opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and of the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or your own language:

- welcoming the acquittal of Hamed Jamal Khalifa;
- urging that the death sentences imposed on the other 10 should be commuted in the event that they are upheld by the Court of Cassation;

- reiterating Amnesty International's unconditional opposition to the death penalty and urging that no future death sentences be passed, and that no further death penalties be carried out;
- urging the Jordan government to sign the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at abolishing the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal
King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
The Royal Palace
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams: King Hussein, Amman, Jordan
Faxes: +962-6-634-755
Salutation: Your Majesty

2) His Excellency Dr 'Abd al-Salam al-Majali
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
PO Box 80
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Amman, Jordan
Faxes: +962-6-642-520
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Amman, Jordan
Salutation: Your Excellency

3) His Excellency Hisham al-Tall
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Amman, Jordan
Salutation: Your Excellency

4) His Excellency Salamah Hammad
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams: Minister of the Interior, Amman, Jordan
Faxes: +962-6-606-908
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

diplomatic representatives of Jordan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 September 1995.