

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 31/13/97

EXTRA 143/97

Fear of Imminent Execution

22 October 1997

YEMEN Muhammad Hussein Ali al-Zandani, possibly under age 18

Muhammad Hussein Ali al-Zandani is at imminent risk of execution. He is reported to have been scheduled for execution three times during the last three months. He was given a stay of execution each time following appeals by his lawyer and family for a review of his case, including on grounds of age.

Muhammad Hussein Ali al-Zandani was initially sentenced to death on murder charges approximately one and a half years ago. His conviction and sentence have since been upheld by the different courts of appeal, and were reportedly ratified by the President of the Republic of Yemen in August 1997.

The penal code of Yemen prohibits the imposition of the death penalty against those under the age of 18. However, the exact age of Muhammad Hussein Ali al-Zandani is reported to have been subject to disagreement between the criminal investigation police, the public prosecution and his lawyer and family. The criminal investigation police reportedly stated he was 22. The public prosecution is said to have said he was 19. His lawyer and family have argued he is currently just under 18, and was 16 at the time of the offence.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of torture. The imposition of such a punishment on juveniles is strictly prohibited by Yemen law and international human rights standards. If Muhammad Hussein Ali al-Zandani was indeed 16 at the time of the offence, the imposition of the death penalty against him would be a gross violation of Yemen law and international human rights standards.

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

- expressing concern that Muhammad Hussein Ali al-Zandani appears to be at risk of imminent execution and urging commutation of the death sentence;
- drawing the president's attention to the international prohibition of the use of the death penalty against juveniles.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency

General 'Ali Abdullah Saleh

President of the Republic of Yemen

Sana'a, The Republic of Yemen

Telegrams: President 'Ali Abdullah Saleh, Sana'a, Republic of Yemen

Faxes: +967 1 262 017

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Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

diplomatic representatives of Yemen accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.