

UA 214/02

Fear for safety/
Fear of torture or ill-treatment

16 July 2002

EGYPT 'Aziza 'Abbas Muhammad (f)

'Amar Nabil al-Maghrebi (m), aged 16, her son

'Aziza 'Abbas Muhammad, the wife of a political prisoner, was detained for the third time this month on 8 July. She is being held in incommunicado detention at an unknown location, possibly by members of the State Security Intelligence (SSI). Amnesty International fears that she is at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

She was previously detained and interrogated on 1 July, by the State Security Intelligence (SSI). She was released the following day, but rearrested on 3 July, before once again being released on 4 July.

On 29 June, her two sons, one of them a minor, were detained as they attempted to visit their father Nabil 'Abd al-Majid al-Maghrebi. He is held at High Security Prison in Tora, Cairo on a life sentence for membership of an armed Islamist group.

The young men were reportedly accused of trying to supply their father with a mobile telephone and issued with a 30 day detention order. Both, including 16-year-old 'Amar Nabil al-Maghrebi, are reportedly held at Istiqbal Tora Prison.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Torture of political detainees is common in Egypt, in SSI branches, police stations and occasionally prisons. Relatives of political prisoners have been victims of human rights violations, including detention without charge and torture, solely by reason of their family relationship.

The most common methods of torture reported are: electric shocks, beatings, suspension by the wrists or ankles, burning with cigarettes. Various forms of psychological torture, including death threats and threats of rape or sexual abuse of the detainee or their female relatives are also common. 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.

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic or your own language:

- urging that 'Aziza 'Abbas Muhammad is humanely treated and given regular access to her lawyer and relatives;
- asking the authorities to confirm the whereabouts of 'Aziza 'Abbas Muhammad;
- calling for her to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence or immediately released;
- reminding the government of the absolute prohibition on torture in customary international law and 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";

- calling for 16-year-old 'Amar Nabil al-Maghrebi to be treated in accordance with international standards for the protection of juvenile detainees, which include their separation from adults.

APPEALS TO: (It may be difficult to get through to these numbers, but please keep trying)

His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt
Telegram:President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt
Fax:+ 202 390 1998
E-mail:webmaster@presidency.gov.eg
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:moi@idsc.gov.eg
Salutation:Dear Minister

His Excellency Mr Faruq Sayf al-Nasr
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Midan Lazoghly, Cairo, Egypt
Telegram:Minister Sayf al-Nasr, Cairo, Egypt
Fax:+ 202 795 8103
E-mail: moheb@idsc.gov.eg
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Public Prosecutor
Counsellor Maher 'Abd al-Wahid
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali
Ramses Street
Cairo
EGYPT
Fax:+ 202 577 4716

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 27 August 2002.