

PUBLIC

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Death penalty

10 Januar

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY Abd al-Mun'im Abu Salah (m), 22

Abd al-Mun'im Abu Sallah, a naval policeman, was condemned to death by a Military Court in Khan Yunis on 4 January, for the fatal shooting of another naval policeman that morning. He was convicted by a panel of three judges, after a grossly unfair trial at which he was not provided with a lawyer. He has two weeks in which to appeal against his sentence. The sentence will then be sent to President Arafat for ratification. A sentence in 2001 was carried out within days of being ratified.

The shootings took place at 4.30am at a Naval Police Force sentry-post in Deir al-Balkh. Six naval policemen, who were asleep at the time, were hit: 19-year-old Zakariya Ahmad Al-Masri died instantly, and five others were wounded, two of them badly.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has previously condemned trials by Military Courts as being grossly unfair.

Amnesty International recognizes the need to bring the perpetrators of crime to justice, but this must be done in proceedings which meet international standards for fair trial. The organization is opposed to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and a violation of the right to life.

Other executions have been prevented by pressure from human rights groups within the country and from overseas.

It is a year since the last executions in the Palestinian Authority. On 13 January 2001 two Palestinians were executed, one of them the day after his trial.

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

- recognizing the need to bring perpetrators of crimes to justice;
- expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty, and urging President Yasser Arafat not to ratify the death sentence imposed on Abd al-Mun'im Abu Sallah;
- expressing concern that Abd al-Mun'im Abu Sallah was sentenced in unfair proceedings,
- calling for a retrial to take place before an ordinary criminal court in accordance with international standards for fair trial and without recourse to the death penalty;
- urging that no more executions be carried out in the Palestinian Authority, and that the authorities work towards abolishing the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

President Yasser Arafat
Office of the President
Ramallah
Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: President Arafat, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

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Fax: + 972 2 298 6212 (it may be difficult to get through, please keep trying)

Salutation: Dear President Arafat

Freih Abu Middein
Minister of Justice
P O Box 1021

Gaza

Palestinian Authority

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Gaza, Palestinian Authority

Fax: + 972 8 286 7109/197

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the Palestinian Authority accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 21 February 2002.