

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 98/98

Fear of imminent forcible return /
Death penalty

7 December 1998

GREECE

Mohamed Doguz, Syrian national

On 8 December 1998 Mohamed Doguz is due to be forcibly returned to Syria where he faces the death penalty on charges of treason during his military service.

As a result, Mohamed Doguz fled to Greece and claimed asylum and, in 1989, was recognized as a refugee by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Mohamed Doguz faces forcible return to Syria as a result of being convicted in Greece more than four years ago of drug use and sentenced to three years in jail. Now, 17 months past the end of his prison sentence, he is still in custody, pending expulsion, despite the fact that this was not a condition of his release from prison.

Amnesty International believes that the Greek Government has a duty to ensure that no one is sent back to a country where they may face grave human rights violations, such as torture, "disappearance", the death penalty or extrajudicial execution.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mohamed Doguz's return to Syria has already been postponed twice. The first time, on 1 December, when international protests broke out and the Greek authorities were forced to return him to custody in Athens and again, on 5 December, when the British pilot of the Syrian airlines plane due to take him back refused.

On the first occasion the Greek authorities gave Mohamed Doguz the option to apply for asylum in another safe country. On 2 December, he made a formal request to emigrate to the United States of America, which is reportedly under consideration.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, French, German, Greek or your own language:

- urging the Greek authorities not to expel Mohamed Doguz to Syria where he faces the death penalty;
- urging them to abide by their international obligations under the principle of non-refoulement, in particular Article 33 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, not to forcibly return anyone to a country where he or she would be at risk of serious human rights violations;
- urging the Greek authorities to grant Mohamed Doguz effective protection in Greece, as advised by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees, at least until he is able to find a safe third country;
- reminding the government of Greece of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3 : "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person".

APPEALS TO:

Mr Kostas Simitis
Prime Minister

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Athens, Greece

2

Faxes: + 30 1 671 5799
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Mr Georgios Papandreou
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Telegrams: Minister Foreign Affairs, Athens, Greece
Faxes: + 30 1 33 94 224 / 36 12 885
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Philippos Petsalnikos
Minister of Public Order
Telegrams: Minister Public Order
Faxes: + 30 1 69 17 851
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Evangelos Yannopoulos
Minister of Justice
Telegrams: Minister Justice, Athens, Greece
Faxes: + 30 1 77 55 835
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

diplomatic representatives of Greece accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>