

EXTERNAL

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Death Penalty

20 April 1998

LEBANON Hasan Nada Abu Jabal
Wisam Nayif 'Issa

Hasan Nada Abu-Jabal (Egyptian) and Wisam Nayif 'Issa are under threat of judicial execution after the death penalty passed on them was upheld by the Criminal Court of Cassation. The two men were initially convicted by Mount Lebanon Criminal Court for the double murder of Antoine al-Qayim and his sister Mary al-'Amm at their home in Tabarja. The case has now been referred to the Amnesty Committee for consideration. Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the passing of the death penalty on Hasan Nada Abu-Jabal and Wisam Nayif 'Issa and the alarming increase in the use of the death penalty in Lebanon.

While Amnesty International recognizes the responsibility of governments to bring those charged of criminal offences to trial according to international standards, the organization is opposed in principle to the application of the death penalty. Amnesty International considers the death penalty to be the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and a violation of the right to life enshrined in international human rights instruments. The possibility of a miscarriage of justice always remains, and execution cannot be revoked once it has been carried out.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There has been increasing criticism of the death penalty law by judges and politicians since its introduction in 1994. The new law (no. 302) abrogates the judge's right to take mitigating circumstances into account when considering imposing a death sentence and extends the number of offences to which the death penalty can be imposed .

Dozens of death sentences have been passed by Lebanese courts since the introduction of the Death Penalty Law, and at least 12 judicial executions were carried out between 1994 and December 1997. Only three executions were carried out in over three decades prior to legislation being introduced.

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

- calling for the commutation of the sentences passed on Hasan Nada Abu-Jabal and Wisam Nayif 'Issa;
- expressing concern at the increased application of the death penalty;
- calling for the abrogation of the 1994 death penalty law and the phasing out of the death penalty with a view to its abolition;
- urging the Lebanese authorities to ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

APPEALS TO:

President Elias Hrawi
Presidential Palace
Ba'abda, Beirut
Lebanon

Telegrams: President Hrawi, Beirut, Lebanon

Telephone: +961 1 865 100/1/2

Fax: +961 1 425 393

Telexes: 21000

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Bahij Tabbara
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Rue Sami Solh
Beirut
Lebanon

Telegrams: Minister Tabbara, Beirut, Lebanon

Telephone: +961 1 422 944

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Fax: +961 1 422 957

Salutation: Your Excellency

Justice Munir Hunayn
President
Conseil Supérieur de la Magistrature
Palais de Justice
Beirut
Lebanon

Telegrams: Justice Hunayn, Beirut, Lebanon

Fax: +961 1 422 957 (c/o Ministry of Justice)

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Lebanon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 June 1998.