

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 14/06/97

EXTRA 131/97

Executions/Fear of imminent execution

3 October 1997

IRAQ Ahmad Taha al-'Azzuz

Usama Sobhi

Hamed 'Abd al-Karim

Wahran Yassin al-'Azzuz

al-Shaikh 'Adnan Thabit Mahir

Talal Isma'il Ahmad

There are fears that the six men named above could be at risk of imminent execution.

The six were reportedly sentenced to death by the special court of the General Intelligence Services (*al-Mukhabarat al-'Amma*), in Baghdad, having been arrested in December 1996 for their alleged involvement in a plot to overthrow the government.

Amnesty International is dismayed to learn that a number of officers of the intelligence, special and security forces and former members of the Ba'th Party have recently been executed on charges of plotting to assassinate President Saddam Hussain. These include Faruq Falih al-'Ali, Fawzi Mahmud al-Samarra'i, 'Ali Ahmad Muhammad al-Samarra'i, 'Abd al-Wahab Salih al-Darwish and 'Ali Hassan 'Alyan al-Samarra'i, who was reportedly executed on 29 September 1997.

The organization opposes the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, and an irrevocable violation of the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The imposition of the death penalty in Iraq for a wide range of criminal and political offences remains a major concern for Amnesty International. Each year hundreds of people, including army and intelligence officers, suspected government opponents and those convicted of criminal offences, are reportedly executed. More than 120 army officers were executed following an alleged coup attempt against President Saddam Hussain in June 1996.

Members of banned political parties and other suspected government opponents have been executed in the past for their political activities. Trials of political opponents are held in secret using procedures that do not meet international standards for fair trial. Defendants appear before special courts, usually headed by a military or security officer.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/airmail letters (see note below) in English, Arabic or your own language:

- urging that any sentence of death passed on Ahmad Taha al-'Azzuz, Usama Sobhi, Hamed 'Abd al-Karim, Wahran Yassin al-'Azzuz, al-Shaikh 'Adnan Thabit Mahir, Talal Isma'il Ahmad, be commuted;
- expressing grave concern at reports that Faruq Falih al-'Ali, Fawzi Mahmud al-Samarra'i, 'Ali Ahmad Muhammad al-Samarra'i, 'Abd al-Wahab Salih al-Darwish and 'Ali Hassan 'Alyan al-Samarra'i have been executed;
- stating opposition to the death penalty as the most extreme form of cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and a violation of the right to life, irrespective of the crime for which it is imposed;
- urging for the commutation of any outstanding sentence of death.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President Saddam Hussain
President of the Republic
Presidential Palace
Karadat Mariam
Baghdad, Iraq

Telegrams: President Hussain, Baghdad, Iraq

Telexes: 212299 alqasr ik

Salutation: Your Excellency

Due to a limited and irregular postal service to Iraq and the possibility of delays please write directly to Iraq's diplomatic representative in your country or, if possible, send a telegram or telex. If you are able please send any second appeals to the above address.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 October 1997.