

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 12/04/96

EXTRA 04/96

Death Penalty

15 January 1996

EGYPT Ahmad 'Abd al-'Adhim Ahmad Fawwaz  
Haggag Gum'a Mohammad Salim  
Hosni al-Sayyid Hussein al-Buhairi  
Zakariya Mohammad 'Ali Bashir  
Salah Sa'd Mohammad 'Awadh  
Mostafa 'Abd al-Hamid Mostafa

---

On 13 January 1996 the six men named above were sentenced to death by the Supreme Military Court in Heikstep, east of Cairo. Amnesty International fears that they may be executed within weeks if their sentences are upheld. Eleven other defendants were sentenced to between three and 15 years imprisonment with hard labour; one defendant was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. Six others were acquitted.

The case involved 24 defendants and is known as *al-'Aidoun min al-Sudan* (Returnees from Sudan). The defendants, all alleged members of *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya*, (Islamic Group), a banned Islamist organization, were reportedly arrested in Aswan in June and November 1995, and allegedly found to be in possession of large quantities of arms and ammunition smuggled over the border from Sudan. Charges against them included plotting to overthrow the present regime, threatening peace and national unity through the use of violence and illegally importing weapons and ammunition into the country with a view to engaging in violent and criminal activities.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since October 1992, when President Hosni Mubarak began issuing special decrees referring civilians to be tried by military courts, 70 death sentences have been passed by military courts and 48 executions have been carried out.

The death sentences are subject to ratification by the President of the Republic, and then review by the Military Appeals Bureau, also headed by the President of the Republic. Such procedures fall far short of international standards for fair trial, as guaranteed by Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party, which guarantees that all those convicted shall have the right to have their conviction sentence reviewed by a higher tribunal. The United Nations' Economic and Social Council has urged that these rights be respected in all cases involving the Death Penalty.

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

- expressing concern that the six people mentioned above have been sentenced to death and urging that the President use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute these and other pending death sentences;
- expressing concern at the continuing upsurge in the use of the death penalty in Egypt, and explaining Amnesty International's opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the most extreme form of cruel and inhuman punishment;
- drawing attention to world trends to abolish or reduce the use of the death penalty, in accordance with Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak  
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt  
**Telegrams: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt**  
**Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Ms Navla Gabr  
The Human Rights Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt  
**Faxes: + 20 2 574 7839**

Dr Fathi Sorour  
Speaker  
The People's Assembly  
Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt

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 13 February 1996.