

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 24/10/96

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Executions / Fear of further executions

27 March 1996

**SYRIAMohammed Rashid bin Ahmed Radiyeh
Ahmed bin Bashir Dalloul
Khaled bin Bashir Dalloul
Ahmed bin Hassan al-Qudaimi
Mohammed bin Ali al-Furaij
Khader bin Marwan al-Sheikh Hussein
Marei bin Hassan Shalhah**

At dawn on 25 March 1996, seven Syrians were hanged in a public square in the town of Yabrud, north of Damascus, the home village of the victims. The seven, aged between 19 and 43, were executed after having been found guilty of murder and robbery committed on 10 February 1996.

Amnesty International fears others may be in imminent danger of execution in Syria. The organization opposes the death penalty in all cases, as a violation of the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment.

Furthermore, the death penalty has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect on violent crime, and there is always the risk that people wrongly convicted, especially where trials are speedy, may be executed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to Syrian law, the death penalty is carried out for a variety of offences, one of which is premeditated murder. In 1993 the scope of the death penalty was expanded to cover a wider range of crimes including drug-related offences.

In 1994 at least two people were executed for murder. In 1993, 14 people were executed, five of whom were tried, sentenced and executed with such speed that the additional guarantees and safeguards required by international standards in death penalty cases may have been undermined. In 1992, six people were hanged for murder.

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

- expressing grave concern at the execution of the seven people named above on 25 March 1996 in Yabrud;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crime and their families, but voicing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation to the right to life and the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment which has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect;
- calling for all outstanding death sentences to be commuted and for an end to the use of the death penalty in Syria.

APPEALS TO:

1. His Excellency
President Hafez al-Assad
President of the Republic
Presidential Palace
Abu Rummaneh
Al-Rashid Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: President al-Assad, Damascus, Syria

Telexes: 419160 prespl sy
Salutation: Your Excellency

2. His Excellency Mahmud al-Zu'bi
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
'Abd al-Rahman Shahbandar Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Damascus, Syria
Salutation: Your Excellency

3. His Excellency Hussain Hassun
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Al-Nasr Street
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria
Salutation: Your Excellency

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

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 May 1996.