

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: MDE 12/28/93

Distr: UA/SC

20 December 1993

Further information on UA 384/93 (MDE 12/20/93, 1 November 1993) - and follow-up (MDE 12/25/93, 29 November 1993) - Death Penalty/Legal Concern

EGYPT 'Abd al-Hamid Mohammad 'Abd al-Hamid
 Fathi Imam 'Abd al-Maguid*
 Khuwaylid Mohammad Barakat
 Mohammad 'Abdullah Mohammad
 Ra'fat Mahmoud Mohammad 'Othman
 Mohammad Hosam Ahmed al-Sharif
 Yasser Kamil 'Ali (sentenced *in absentia*)
 Mohammad Zein (sentenced *in absentia*)

* His name has also been given as Fathi 'Abd al-Hamid Hozayen

The first six men named above were executed in Cairo today, 20 December. All eight had been sentenced to death by the Supreme Military Court in Cairo on 30 October.

The eight men were sentenced to death in the case known as *Talai' al-Fatah* (Vanguards of the Conquest) - Group 1, (Military case no. 123/93) in which 55 people were tried. Others received sentences of between life imprisonment with hard labour and three years' imprisonment. Fifteen were acquitted. Charges against them included reviving the banned Islamic group known as *Gihad* (Holy Struggle), murdering two civilians, and the attempted murder of policemen and security guards. Some sessions of this trial were observed by Amnesty International delegates.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the last 18 months politically motivated acts of violence by armed opposition groups have escalated sharply in Egypt. Islamic militant groups have committed deliberate and arbitrary killings, which Amnesty International has condemned. Victims have included a writer known for his secularist views, tourists, Copts, government officials and police and prison officers.

The eight people mentioned above (including two sentenced *in absentia*) were sentenced to death by a military court, even though all of them were believed to be civilians. (For further information see Amnesty International report Military trials of civilians: a catalogue of human rights violations, MDE 12/16/93, October 1993). The death sentences were 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 guarantee that everyone who is convicted shall have the right to their conviction and sentence being 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 and airmail letters either in Arabic, French, English or in your own language:

- expressing grave concern at these executions, which Amnesty International considers to be summary and arbitrary executions;
- urging that civilians should not be tried by military courts and calling for new trials in civilian courts which comply with international standards to which Egypt is a state party (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights);
- expressing concern at the sudden upsurge in the use of the death penalty in Egypt (39 death sentences have been passed by military courts since December 1992 and 28 executions have now taken place), 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
 Muhammad Hosni Mubarak
 President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
 'Abedine Palace
 Cairo, Egypt

Telegrams: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt

Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN

Faxes: 202 260 54 17

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

The Human Rights Department
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Corniche al-Nil
 Cairo, Egypt

Faxes: 202 723173

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

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.