

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: MDE 12/09/91
Distr: UA/SC

15 February 1991

Further information on 508/90 (MDE 12/13/90, 18 December 1990, and follow-up MDE 12/02/91, 30 January 1991) - Fear of Torture

EGYPT:Mustafa Mohammad Said al-Sharqawi
Mohammad Hussein Mohammad Ibrahim Sallam
Hassan Mohammad Isma'il Mohammad

The three men named above have now been detained for over four months, apparently because of their decisions to convert from Islam to Christianity. They were scheduled to appear before a Cairo court on 11 February. However, according to reports received by Amnesty International, only two of them appeared at the hearing. Hassan Mohammad Isma'il Mohammad was not present and the reasons for his absence are not known. Reportedly, the court remanded all three in custody for a further 45-day period, their next hearing being due on 27 March. There is yet no indication if and when they will be tried.

These three prisoners are reportedly held in solitary confinement at Abu Za'abal Prison, and there are still fears that Hassan Mohammad Isma'il Mohammad may be being tortured and ill-treated because of his refusal to renounce his beliefs. His absence at the hearing is therefore particularly disturbing. He has not been seen by the lawyer, nor by his family since 9 January 1991.

Amnesty International is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of these three men, who it believes to be prisoners of conscience, and is seeking assurances that they are being humanely treated.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- urging the immediate, unconditional release of these three prisoners if they are held solely because of their conscientiously-held religious beliefs;
- inquiring about the reasons for their continuing detention, any charges against them and the evidence on which these may be based;
- inquiring particularly about the treatment of Hassan Mohammad Isma'il Mohammad and urging that he be given immediate and regular access to his family, lawyer and to all necessary medical treatment;
- urging the authorities to initiate a thorough, impartial investigation into the allegations of torture and to bring to justice any official found to be responsible for torture.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
General Mohammad Abdel-Halim Moussa
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Al Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab Al Louq
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Telexes: 21361 MOICM UN
Faxes: + 20 2 355 7792

His Excellency
Faruq Sayf al-Nasr
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Midan Lazoghli
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Telexes : 20267 MJUST UN
Faxes: + 20 2 355 8103

COPIES TO:

His Excellency Dr Ahmad 'Esmat 'Abd al-Maguid
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Midan At-Tahrir
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 March 1991.