

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 56/98

Fear of refoulement / Death penalty

14 August 1998

ALBANIA/EGYPTAhmed Isma'il 'Othman

Ahmed Isma'il 'Othman was reportedly arrested on 13 August 1998 in Tirana by the Albanian authorities and is at risk of being *refouled* to Egypt, where he has been sentenced to death *in absentia*. Ahmed Isma'il 'Othman is at imminent risk of execution if he is sent back to Egypt.

Recently, other Egyptians under sentence of death *in absentia* have been forcibly returned to Egypt by the Albanian authorities (see EXTRA 53/98, MDE 12/42/98, 4 August 1998).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ahmed Isma'il 'Othman was sentenced to death *in absentia* by the Supreme Military Court in Cairo in March 1994, in the case known as "the attempted assassination of the Prime Minister Dr 'Atef Sidqi". Fifteen people were tried in this case. Nine of them were sentenced to death (four *in absentia*, including Ahmed Isma'il 'Othman), three were sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, one to five years' imprisonment, and another to three years (*in absentia*). One person was acquitted. Charges against them included plotting to kill the Prime Minister on 25 November 1993, plotting to overthrow the government, possessing explosives and weapons, forging documents and reviving the banned Islamic group known as *Gihad* (Holy Struggle).

Under Egyptian law a sentence passed by a military court *in absentia* is carried out as soon as the the person is arrested or returned to Egypt.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/express/airmail letters in Albanian, English or your own language:

- asking the Albanian Government to clarify the circumstances surrounding Ahmed Isma'il 'Othman's arrest in Tirana on 13 August 1998;
- urging the Albanian Government to clarify whether he is still in detention, and, if so, on what charges;
- urging that he be charged with a recognizably criminal offence or immediately released;
- calling on the Albanian authorities not to return Ahmed Isma'il 'Othman to Egypt, where he is at risk of imminent execution;
- reminding the authorities of Albania's commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

APPEALS TO: (If voice answers when sending a fax, please ask to send a fax.)

President of Albania

Rexhep Mejdani

Presidenti i Republikës së Shqipërisë

Zyra e Presidencës, Tirana, Republic of Albania

Telegrams: President Mejdani, Tirana, Albania

Fax: +355 42 33761 or +355 42 28420

Tel: +355 42 28420 or +355 42 28313

Salutation: Dear President

Prime Minister

Mr Fatos Nano

Kryetari i Këshillit të Ministrave, Tirana, Republic of Albania

Telegrams: Prime Minister Nano, Tirana, Albania

Fax: +355 42 27888 or +355 43 34818
Tel: +355 42 28210
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Paskal Milo
Ministri i Punëve të Jashtme
Bul. Zhan d'Ark, Tirana
Republic of Albania
Fax: + 355 42 62084 or + 355 42 62085
Tel: + 355 42 28311 or +355 42 34600
Email: postmaster@minjash.tirana.al
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Internal Order

Perikli Teta
Ministri i Rendit Publik
Ministria e Rendit Publik,
Tirana
Republic of Albania
Telegrams: Minister Internal Order, Tirana, Albania
Tel: + 355 42 32794
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

Thimio Kondi
Ministri i Drejtësisë
Tirana
Republic of Albania
Fax: +355 42 25861 or +355 42 28359
Tel: +355 42 28428 or +355 42 28359
Salutation: Dear Minister

and to diplomatic representatives of Albania accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 September 1998.

***"Everyone has the right to life, liberty
and security of person."***

Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>