

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 12/02/2001

UA 02/01

Death Pen

EGYPT Haris 'Aqqar and his wife
Three others

Five people have been sentenced to death and are at risk of execution.

Haris 'Aqqar, his wife and son, her brother and a family friend were sentenced to death by the Giza Criminal Court on 23 November 2000 for killing Khalid Isma'il al-Sayyid. Their sentences have been sent to the *Mufti*, the highest religious authority in Egypt, for approval. If approved, the Giza Criminal Court will pronounce the verdict on 18 January 2001 before sending it to the president for ratification.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty has been applied increasingly in Egypt in the last few years. Last year dozens of people were sentenced to death and at least 22 people were executed. At least six women were among those executed, including 'Attiyat Hussain Hassan who featured in EXTRA 73/98, MDE 12/48/98, 7 October 1998 and follow-up MDE 12/12/00, 2 May 2000. The death penalty is applied for criminal offences such as drug use or trafficking, murder and offences related to "terrorism".

Death sentences passed by criminal courts are submitted to the *Mufti* for approval as a routine measure, where the majority are approved. They are then passed to the President of the Republic or his nominee for ratification. Appeals against final verdicts by criminal courts can be submitted to the Court of Cassation, but only on the grounds of procedural irregularities in the trial.

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

- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime;
- explaining your opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life (as stated in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person"), pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect and is brutalizing to all involved in its application;
- urging the *Mufti* not to approve this death sentence;
- urging the President to use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute this and all other pending death sentences;
- drawing attention to the world trend towards abolishing or reducing 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:

M. Farid Nasr Wassel
Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Wakf Ministry
Sabri Abou Alam Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

Faxes: + 202 3926 155 (If somebody picks up the phone, please ask them to turn the fax machine on)

E-mails: mawkaf@idscl.gov.eg

Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt

Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN

Faxes: + 202 390 1998

e-mails: webmaster@presidency.gov.eg

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Ms Shadia Farag

The Human Rights Department

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt

Faxes: + 202 574 9533

Dr Fathi Sorour

Speaker

The People's Assembly

Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt

Faxes: + 202 574 9175

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 14 February 2001.