

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 12/002/2002

EXTRA 10/02

Death pen

EGYPT 'Afaf Abu al-Magid 'Uthman (f), aged 35

'Afaf Abu al-Magid 'Uthman has been sentenced to death and is at risk of execution. The sentence has been sent to the religious authorities for approval.

The 35-year old woman was convicted for having murdered a child. On 27 December 2001, Giza Criminal Court submitted the death sentence to the *Mufti*, the highest religious authority in Egypt. If he gives his approval, as expected, the court is scheduled to pronounce the death sentence on 29 January 2002. The sentence will then be passed to the President of the Republic for ratification.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Egyptian courts have increased their use of the death penalty in the last few years, despite the world trend towards abolition. At least 67 people, including five women, were sentenced to death in 2001. The death penalty is applied for criminal offences such as drug use or trafficking, murder and offences related to "terrorism".

An appeal against the final decision of a criminal court can only be submitted to the Court of Cassation on grounds of procedural irregularities in the trial.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life. The death penalty has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments and is brutalizing to all involved in its application. More than 100 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic or your own language:

- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime for which 'Afaf Abu al-Magid 'Uthman has been convicted and recognizing that governments have a responsibility to bring the perpetrators of violent crime to justice;
- expressing your opposition to the death penalty in all cases, as a violation of the right to life as set out in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- pointing out that the death penalty has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than other punishments, and that it is brutalizing to all involved in its application;
- urging the *Mufti* not to approve this death sentence or any others that come before him;
- urging the President to use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute this sentence if and when it comes before him and all other outstanding death sentences;
- drawing attention to the world trend towards abolishing or reducing the use of the death penalty, in accordance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party.

APPEALS TO:

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

Telex: 93794 WAZRA UN

Telegram: President of the Republic, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: + 202 390 1998
E-mail: webmaster@presidency.gov.eg
Salutation: Your Excellency

M. Farid Nasr Wassel
Mufti of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Wakf Ministry
Sabri Abou Alam Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Telegram: Mufti of the Republic, Wakf Ministry, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: + 202 3926 155 (*If somebody picks up the phone, please ask them to
turn the fax machine on*)
E-mail: mawkaf@idscl.gov.eg
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Mr Hussain Dharar
The Human Rights Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: + 202 574 7936 (*Please clearly state at the top of the fax: for the
attention of Mr Hussein Dharar*)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Dr Fathi Sorour
Speaker
The People=s Assembly
Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: + 202 574 9175
Salutation: Your Excellency

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.