

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Penalty

18 March 1994

EGYPT:

Salah al-Sayyid SULAYMAN
'Issam Mohammad 'Abd al-Rahman AL-TOUNI
Nour al-Din Sulayman Mohammad 'ALI
Amin Isma'il AL-MUSAILHI
Tariq 'Abd al-Nabi Hassan AL-FAHAL
'Adel al-Sayyid 'ABD AL-QODOUS (*in absentia*)
Tharwat Salah SHAHHATA (*in absentia*)
Ahmed Isma'il 'OTHMAN (*in absentia*)
Yasser 'Ali AL-SIRRI (*in absentia*)

The nine people named above were sentenced to death (four *in absentia*) by the Supreme Military Court in Cairo, which pronounced judgment in the case known as *the attempted assassination of the Prime Minister Dr 'Atef Sidqi* on 17 March.

The first five named above could be executed within weeks if their sentences are upheld.

Fifteen people were tried in this case. The nine people named above were sentenced to death, three people were sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, one to five years' imprisonment, another to three years (*in absentia*) and one was acquitted. Charges against them included plotting to kill the Prime Minister, 'Atef Sidqi, 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).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the last 21 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, Copts, tourists, government officials and many police and prison officers.

The nine people named above (including four sentenced *in absentia*) were sentenced to death by a military court, even though all of them are believed to be civilians. The death sentences are 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 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 concern that the above nine people have been sentenced to death and urging that the President use his constitutional right to grant clemency and commute these and all other pending death sentences; if these men are executed, Amnesty International will consider them summary and arbitrary executions;

- expressing concern at the sudden upsurge in the use of the death penalty

in Egypt (51 death sentences have been passed by military courts since December 1992 and 30 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

Telegram: 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. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 April 1994.