

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: MDE 12/12/94  
Distr: UA/SC

UA 273/94

Death Penalty

18 July 1994

EGYPT

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On 16 July 1994, the five people named above were sentenced to death by the Supreme Military Court in Cairo, which pronounced judgment in the case known as *the attempted assassination of the Interior Minister, General Hassan Mohammad al-Alfy*. The five men could be executed within weeks if their sentences are upheld.

Seventeen people were tried in this case. The five people named above were sentenced to death, 10 people were sentenced to between three and five years' imprisonment, and two were acquitted. The charges against them include attempting to assassinate the Interior Minister, General Hassan Mohammad al-Alfy on 18 August 1993, illegally possessing weapons, the murder in January 1994 of a prosecution witness in a case against Islamist militants who had tried to kill the Prime Minister, 'Atef Sedqi, and membership of a banned Islamist group known as *Gihad* (Holy Struggle).

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the last 26 months politically motivated acts of violence by armed opposition groups have escalated sharply in Egypt. Islamist 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 five people named above 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 five 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 upsurge in the use of the death penalty in Egypt (56 death sentences have been passed by military courts since December 1992 and 35 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  
**Telegrams: 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 August 1994.