

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Penalty

6 December 1994

EGYPT

Mohammad 'Ata'-Allah 'Omar

Rabi' Mohammad Mahmoud Hussein

Amnesty International is concerned at death sentences passed on Mohammad 'Ata'-Allah 'Omar and Rabi' Mohammad Mahmoud Hussein on 3 December; the two could be executed within weeks if their sentences are upheld.

On 3 December, the Supreme Military Court in Cairo pronounced judgement in the case of 16 defendants, all alleged members of the banned Islamist group known as *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya*. Charges against them included armed attacks on tourists in the Red Sea resort of Hurghada on 27 September 1994, resulting in the death of two German tourists and two Egyptian nationals, possession of automatic weapons and ammunition and membership of a banned organization (*al-Gama'a al-Islamiya*). Other defendants in this case received sentences ranging from five to 15 years' imprisonment with hard labour (five of them *in absentia*).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the last thirty months politically-motivated acts of violence by armed opposition groups have escalated sharply in Egypt. Islamist militant groups have committed deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, which Amnesty International has condemned. Victims have included a writer known for his secularist views, Copts and tourists. Government officials and police and prison officers, in particular, have been targetted.

60 death sentences have been passed by Egyptian military courts since December 1992 and 41 executions carried out. On 20 September 1994, Amnesty International issued a 24-page report detailing its human rights concerns in Egypt, including the high number of executions following unfair trials by military courts (see Human Rights Defenders Under Threat (MDE 12/15/94)).

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

- expressing concern that Mohammad 'Ata'-Allah 'Omar and Rabi' Mohammad Mahmoud Hussein have been sentenced to death and urging that the President use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute these and all other pending death sentences; if these two men are executed, Amnesty International will consider them to be summary and arbitrary executions;
- expressing concern at the upsurge in the use of the death penalty in Egypt 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 Mohammad Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt

Telegrams: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt

Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN

Faxes: 202 269 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 of 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 16 January 1995.