

PUBLIC

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UA 227/02

Fear of torture or ill-treatment

23 July 2002

EGYPT

Sayida Muhammad Gad al-Rab (f) aged 28

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In the early hours of 14 July, law student Sayida Muhammad Gad al-Rab, the wife of a political detainee, was arrested at her home in the 'Ain Shams district of Cairo by members of the State Security Intelligence (SSI). She is being held in incommunicado detention at an unknown location. Amnesty International fears that she is at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

Sayida Muhammad Gad al-Rab has been detained by the SSI in the past. In 1992 she was detained together with other women accused of illegal political activities. She was held for one month at the SSI headquarters in Lazoghly Square in Cairo where she was reportedly tortured. She was subsequently transferred to a prison and released after two months.

Her husband Muhammad Ghuneim has been detained for almost a decade without charge or trial under emergency legislation, as an alleged member of an armed Islamist group.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Torture of political detainees is common in Egypt, in SSI branches, police stations and occasionally prisons. Relatives of political prisoners have been victims of human rights violations, including detention without charge and torture, solely by reason of their family relationship. Earlier this month, 'Aziza 'Abbas Muhammad, the wife of a political prisoner, was arrested in the same neighbourhood of Cairo. She remains in incommunicado detention and is believed to be held by members of the SSI (See UA 214/02, MDE 12/024/2002, 16 July 2002).

The most common methods of torture reported are: electric shocks, beatings, suspension by the wrists or ankles, burning with cigarettes, and various forms of psychological torture, including death threats and threats of rape or sexual abuse of the detainee or their female relatives. Although lawyers and local human rights groups have filed hundreds of complaints of torture with the Public Prosecutor's Office, no impartial investigations are known to have been conducted.

The UN Committee Against Torture recommended "that Egypt takes effective measures to prevent torture in police and SSI custody" in May 1999.

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

- urging that Sayida Muhammad Gad al-Rab is humanely treated and given regular access to her lawyer and relatives;
- asking the authorities to confirm her whereabouts;
- calling for her to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence or immediately released;
- reminding the government of the absolute prohibition on torture in customary international law and of their commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment";

#### **APPEALS TO:**

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

**Telegram:** President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt

**E-mail:** webmaster@presidency.gov.eg

**Fax:** + 202 390 1998

**Telex:** 93794 WAZRA UN

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

His Excellency General Habib al-Adeli  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street  
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt  
**Telegram:** Interior Minister, Cairo, Egypt  
**E-mail:** moi@idsc.gov.eg  
**Fax:** + 202 579 2031  
**Salutation:** Dear Minister

His Excellency Mr Faruq Sayf al-Nasr  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Midan Lazoghly, Cairo, Egypt  
**Telegram:** Justice Minister, Cairo, Egypt  
**E-mail:** moheb@idsc.gov.eg  
**Fax:** + 202 795 8103  
**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**COPIES TO:**

Public Prosecutor  
Counsellor Maher 'Abd al-Wahid  
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali  
Ramses Street  
Cairo  
Egypt  
**Fax:** + 202 577 4716

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 3 September 2002.