

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 451/94 (MDE 16/06/94, 22 December 1994) - Death Penalty

JORDAN Abdullah Hashaikeh

Isma'il al-'Amayra, 28
Zakharia Qassem, 23
Muhammad 'Ali 'Issa, 25
Muhammad Ahmad al-'Atharba, 25
Suleiman 'Abd al-'Aal, 22
Samir Taylakh, 23
Yassin Zahra, 20

Muhammad Ahmad al-Harithi, Omani national (sentenced *in absentia*)

Yahya 'Uwaydat Muhammad al-Shawarkah, Jordanian national (sentenced *in absentia*)

Hamed Jamal Khalifah, Saudi Arabian national (sentenced *in absentia*)

The Court of Cassation has not upheld the death sentences imposed on 11 people sentenced to death by the State Security Court on 21 December 1994 on charges of taking part in a plot to overthrow the government and of bombings. On 29 March 1995, the Court of Cassation decided to return the case of the 11 to the State Security Court for retrial, in order to "listen to some witnesses it did not listen to during the trial", according to a judicial official.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The trial of a group of 25 people, including the 11 sentenced to death, began on 18 July 1994. Many of the defendants are veterans of the Afghan war, where they fought with Islamic resistance groups before the overthrow of the Soviet-backed government in 1992. Hence the trial has become known as the trial of the "Arab Afghans".

Some 16 of the defendants had retracted confessions which they claim to have made as a result of torture; all the defendants had pleaded innocent at the start of the trial.

During 1994 Amnesty International repeatedly expressed its concerns to the Jordanian authorities about the increase in the use of the death penalty. At least seven executions took place during the year with at least 12 executions during 1993, the highest number for two decades. Others remain on death row.

Amnesty International does not condone crimes of violence, and recognizes the responsibility of governments to bring the perpetrators to justice. However, it opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and of the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment as specified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express or airmail letters

- urging that the retrial of the 11 people should ensure that an investigation into allegations of torture is carried out;
- reiterating Amnesty International's unconditional opposition to the death penalty and urging that no more death sentences be passed in Jordan, including in this case, and that no further executions be carried out;
- urging the Government of Jordan to sign the Second Optional Protocol to the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at abolishing the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Majesty King Hussein bin Talal
King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
The Royal Palace
Amman, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Faxes: +962-6-634-755
Telegrams: King Hussein, Amman, Jordan
Salutation: Your Majesty

2) His Excellency Dr 'Abd al-Salam al-Majali
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
PO Box 80
Amman, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Faxes: +962-6-642-520
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Amman, Jordan
Salutation: Your Excellency

3) His Excellency Hisham al-Tall
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Amman, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams: Minister of Justice, Amman, Jordan
Salutation: Your Excellency

4) His Excellency Salamah Hammad
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Amman, The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Faxes: +962-6-606-908
Telegrams: Minister of the Interior, Amman, Jordan
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Jordan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 21 May 1995.