

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 119/96

Fear of Execution

29 July 1996

LEBANON Ahmad Hallaq

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Amnesty International is extremely concerned that Ahmed Hallaq may face imminent execution after being sentenced to death. The organization is calling for this and any other death sentences in Lebanon to be commuted. Ahmed Hallaq's death sentence can now only be commuted by an amnesty from President Elias Hirawi.

On 29 July 1996, a Lebanese military court rejected the appeal by Ahmad Hallaq to commute the death sentence imposed in a retrial of his case on 19 June 1996. Under Lebanese law, Ahmad Hallaq has the right to appeal for a presidential decision to commute or annul the death sentence.

Ahmad Hallaq was found guilty of carrying out a bombing in Beirut targeting members of the Party of God (*Hizbullah*) on 21 December 1994, on the orders of the Israeli intelligence agency, Mossad. The bomb killed three people and wounded 11.

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. Amnesty International has expressed its concern to the Lebanese authorities about the use of the death penalty. Four executions were carried out in 1994, and one in 1995.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In February 1995, a military prosecutor demanded the death penalty for Ahmad Hallaq for his involvement in the bombing of December 1994 in Beirut. In April 1995 he was tried *in absentia* and sentenced to death. He was believed to have fled to the Israeli controlled "security zone" in south Lebanon after the bombing incident. In February 1996 he was snatched by Lebanese army intelligence agents from the "security zone". Under Lebanese law, people sentenced to death *in absentia* have the right to a retrial.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please make urgent appeals by telephone, telegram, telex, fax, express or airmail letters in English, French, Arabic or your own language:**

- urging that the death sentence on Ahmad Hallaq be commuted;
- stating unconditional opposition to the death penalty and urging that no further executions be carried out;
- urging the Lebanese Government to sign the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aimed at abolishing the death penalty.

#### APPEALS TO:

President

President Elias Hirawi

Office of the President

Baabda, Beirut, Republic of Lebanon

**Telephone: (9611) 865 100 / 301**

**Fax: (9611) 425 393**

**Telex: 21000**

**Telegrams: President Hirawi, Beirut, Lebanon**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Lebanon accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 August 1996.