

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

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**UA 168/93     Death Penalty**

**24 May 1993**

**SYRIA:        'Ali Mahmud Qasim  
               Farid Mahmud al-Jabri  
               Qahraman Jamhur Muhammad  
               Muhammad Amin Bin Muhammad  
               Ahmad Farhan Sakfan**

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Amnesty International is concerned that the above five people were executed on 20 May 1993. The organization is further concerned that they were executed less than two months after the criminal incident for which they were convicted had taken place. It is feared that the speed with which this ultimate punishment was passed and carried out may have undermined the additional guarantees and safeguards required by international standards in death penalty cases. The organization is seeking clarification of the trial procedures and the processes of appeal and ratification of the sentences followed in the case of the five victims.

The five men named above, all common law prisoners, were found guilty of setting fire to al-Hasaka Prison on 24 March 1993, causing the death of 57 inmates and injuries to other prisoners. Two other defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment and a juvenile aged 17 received a 12-year prison sentence. Five prison guards were also reported to have been sentenced to three years' imprisonment apparently for being involved in drug corruption with the prisoners prior to the fire incident.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:**

- expressing regret that 'Ali Mahmud Qasim, Farid Mahmud al-Jabri, Qahraman Jamhur Muhammad, Muhammad Amin Bin Muhammad and Ahmad Farhan Sakfan were executed on 20 May 1993;
- seeking details about the trial procedures, appeal, and ratification of the sentences followed in this case;
- urging commutation of any outstanding death sentences.

**APPEALS TO**

1) His Excellency  
President Hafez al-Assad  
Presidential Palace  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: President Al-Assad, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes: 419160 munjed sy**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

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2) His Excellency  
Muhammad Harba  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes : 411018 AFIRS SY**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

3) His Excellency 'Abdallah Tulba  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Naser Street  
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic  
**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Damascus, Syria**  
**Telexes : 411018 AFIRS SY**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO :** Syrian diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 July 1993.