

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 31/12/97

EXTRA 136/97 Fear of Imminent Execution/Legal concern 10 October 1997

YEMEN Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman Dadyah, 25
Tawfiq Muhammad Mas'ad al-Tam, 22
'Abd al-Jabbar Muhammad Mas'ad al-Tam, 25
'Abdullah Ahmad 'Abdullah Mansur, 18

There are fears that the four above-named men may be at risk of imminent execution.

The four men were convicted of the abduction and rape of a 14-year-old boy and sentenced by a Criminal Court in Dhamar on 7 October 1997. Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman Dadyah received the death penalty. The three other men each received sentences of up to 10 years imprisonment and 100 lashes.

As a possible result of mass protests by members of the victim's tribe demanding the execution of the men, however, a Court of Appeal annulled the ruling of the Criminal Court on 8 October, and sentenced all four men to death by beheading or stoning.

Amnesty International fears that the death sentences may have been passed as a result of tribal pressure and that the trial proceedings may have been accelerated in order to carry out the sentences quickly. This fear is heightened by what appears to be a growing pattern of speedy trials and executions in Yemen which have been shown to disregard all international standards for fair trial.

The case is due to appear before the Supreme Court on 11 October after which the sentences will need to be ratified by President 'Ali 'Abdullah Saleh.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

While Amnesty International recognizes the rights and responsibilities of all governments to bring to justice those suspected of criminal offences, it is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate violation of the right to life as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Amnesty International has long-standing concerns regarding the use of the death penalty in Yemen, particularly in light of the fact that sentences are often passed after trials which fail to meet international standards for fair trial (for more details see Amnesty International's report Ratification without implementation: the state of human rights in Yemen, AI Index MDE 31/01/97, pp 36-38).

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

- expressing concern that Muhammad 'Abd al-Rahman Dadyah, Tawfiq Muhammad Mas'ad al-Tam, 'Abd al-Jabbar Muhammad Mas'ad al-Tam and 'Abdullah Ahmad 'Abdullah Mansur appear to be at risk of imminent execution and urging commutation of the sentences, if upheld by the Supreme Court, to a humane punishment;
- acknowledging the right of the government to bring to justice anyone found responsible for criminal offences, but expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty in all cases;
- expressing concern that the trial proceedings may have fallen far short of international standards for fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
 General 'Ali Abdullah Saleh
 President of the Republic of Yemen
 San'aa, The Republic of Yemen
Telegrams: President, San'aa, Yemen
Telexes: 2422 RIASAH YE
Faxes: +967 1 274 147
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior
 Husain Muhammad 'Arab
 Ministry of Interior
 San'aa, The Republic of Yemen
Telegrams: Interior Minister, San'aa, Yemen
Faxes: +967 1 251 529 / 251 566
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Justice
 Isma'il Ahmad al-Wazir
 Ministry of Justice
 San'aa, The Republic of Yemen
Telegrams: Justice Minister, San'aa, Yemen
Faxes: + 967 1 252 138
Salutation: Dear Minister

Please note that the fax numbers provided are correct as far as we know but that difficulties may be experienced in transmitting faxes at certain times of the day possibly connected to working hours or technical problems. If this is the case please try later on.

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

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 November 1997.