

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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EXTRA 52/93

Death Penalty

28 May 1993

EGYPT:

Hassan Ramadan 'Abdullah SHALQANI

Ahmed Hussein Ahmed AL-HUSSEINI

Tariq 'Abd al-Raziq HASSAN

Ashraf Al-Sayyid Ibrahim SALIH

Ibrahim Sayyid 'ABD AL-'AAL

Mostafa Ahmed Hassan HAMZA (sentenced in absentia)

Amnesty International is concerned that the above men were sentenced to death on 27 May 1993 and that they could be executed if their sentences are upheld.

On 27 May 1993 the Supreme Military Court pronounced judgment in the case of 14 defendants, all civilians, facing charges in connection with bomb attacks on tourist targets and an attempt on the life of the Minister of Information, Safwat al-Sherif. Six were sentenced to death, including one in absentia. Two others received sentences of life imprisonment and one a prison term of 10 years, all with hard labour. Two were acquitted, and charges against three others were dropped.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the last 12 months politically motivated acts of violence by armed opposition groups have escalated sharply in Egypt. Islamic militant groups have committed deliberate and arbitrary killings, which Amnesty International has condemned. Victims have included a writer known for his secularist views, tourists, government officials and police and prison officers.

The Egyptian Government has reacted by adopting a number of sweeping measures in law and practice. There have been mass arrests, and prolonged administrative detention, under state of emergency legislation, and detainees have been subjected to torture and ill-treatment during prolonged incommunicado detention. New amendments to the Penal Code in July 1992 increased the number of capital offences for crimes carried out by what are termed "terrorist" groups. Changes to the Criminal Procedure Code introduced at the same time increased police powers of arrest and detention and extended the amount of a time a detainee may be held in incommunicado detention, before being presented to the Procuracy.

In addition, since the end of 1992, many political cases have been referred to military courts for trial, apparently in order that the trials should be concluded swiftly. Between December 1992 and May 1993 at least 22 death sentences have been passed by military courts (though no executions have so far taken place) and there are fears that many more death sentences could follow.

According to reports, the death sentences are subject to review before being referred to the President of the Republic. However, Amnesty International fears

that such procedures fall short of international standards for fair trial, as guaranteed by Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party, which guarantee that everyone who is convicted shall have the right to their conviction and sentence being reviewed by a higher tribunal. The UN's Economic & Social Council has urged that these rights be respected in all cases involving the death penalty.

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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 and degrading treatment or punishment, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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

- expressing grave concern at the death sentences passed on the six men named above. If the sentences are confirmed, urge that the President use his constitutional right to grant clemency and commute these and the other 16 death sentences passed recently by military courts;

- expressing concern at the sudden upsurge in the use of the death penalty in Egypt, and explaining Amnesty International's opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the most extreme form of cruel and inhuman punishment;

- stating that in Amnesty International's view the death penalty is not an effective deterrent to violent crime;

- drawing attention to world trends to abolish or reduce the use of the death penalty, in accordance with Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency
Muhammad Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
'Uruba Palace
Cairo, Egypt
Telegrams: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt
Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
General Muhammad Hussein Tantawi Sulayman
Minister of Defence
Ministry of Defence
23 July St
Kobry al-Qubba
Cairo, Egypt

His Excellency

Mr Faruq Sayf al-Nasr
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Maydan Lazoghly
Cairo, Egypt

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 25 July 1993.