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**EGYPT** **Mohammad Shaaban Mohammad Hassanein**  
**Ayman Kamal al-Din**

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Two men have been forcibly returned to Egypt and are believed to be detained incommunicado by the State Security Investigation (SSI) Department in Lazoghly Square in Cairo, where torture is routine.

Mohammad Shaaban Mohammad Hassanein, an Egyptian-born Danish resident, was reportedly arrested in Pakistan in mid-March on suspicion of links to Islamist armed groups and forcibly returned to Egypt around 25 or 26 May.

Ayman Kamal al-Din was detained in Lebanon, where he had been living under an assumed name, in January. In 1993 an Egyptian military court had sentenced him *in absentia* to three years' imprisonment on charges of involvement in an armed Islamist group. He was returned to Egypt at the beginning of May and it is believed he was handed over to the the SSI. Amnesty International wrote to the Egyptian authorities expressing concern about his safety, but received no reply.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In April 1999 the Supreme Military Court issued its verdict in an unfair trial of 107 people, 60 *in absentia*, accused of membership of an Islamist armed group. More than a dozen of the defendants had been forcibly returned to Egypt from various countries, including Albania, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. Returned defendants were interrogated over several months while held by the SSI in unacknowledged incommunicado detention, and were not allowed to meet their lawyers until they appeared in court in February. Several defendants alleged that they had been tortured, but no independent investigation was apparently carried out.

Torture of political prisoners in Egypt is common, particularly at the SSI headquarters in Lazoghly Square, but also other SSI branches, at police stations and occasionally prisons. The most common methods reported are: electric shocks, beatings, suspension by the wrists or ankles, burning with cigarettes, and various forms of psychological torture, including death threats and threats of rape or sexual abuse of the detainee or their female relatives. Although lawyers and local human rights groups have filed hundreds of complaints of torture with the Public Prosecutor's Office, no impartial investigations are known to have been conducted.

The UN Committee Against Torture recommended "that Egypt takes effective measures to prevent torture in police and SSI custody," after the Egyptian government submitted a report in May 1999.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/E-mails/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Arabic, English, French or your own language:**

- seeking assurances that Mohammad Shaaban Mohammad Hassanein and Ayman Kamal al-Din are being humanely treated in detention and that they are given regular access to lawyers of their choice;
- urging that the authorities charge them with recognizably criminal offences or release them immediately and unconditionally;

- reminding the government of Egypt of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak  
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt  
'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt

**Telegram: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt**

**E-mail: webmaster@presidency.gov.eg**

**Fax: + 202 390 1998**

**Telex: 93794 WAZRA UN**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

His Excellency General Habib al-'Adeli  
Minister of the Interior  
Ministry of the Interior  
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street  
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

**Telegram: Minister Interior, Cairo, Egypt**

**Fax: + 202 579 2031**

**E-mail: moi2@idsc.gov.eg**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr Hani Khalaf

The Human Rights Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt

**Fax: + 202 574 9533**

Dr Fathi Sorour

Speaker, The People's Assembly, Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt

**Fax: + 202 574 9175**

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 10 July 2000.