

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 44/98

Death Penalty

6 July 1998

EGYPTLatifa 'ABD AL-RAHIM (f)

Latifa 'Abd al-Rahim could be executed at any time. She was sentenced to death by a Cairo criminal court that found her guilty of murder. Her death sentence has already been approved by the Mufti, Egypt's highest religious authority. On 30 June 1998 a Cairo Criminal court confirmed her death sentence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty is applied in Egypt for criminal offences such as drug use or trafficking and murder, and for offences related to "terrorism" and has been used extensively in recent years. In 1997 alone Amnesty International recorded 55 death sentences passed by military, criminal and (Emergency) Supreme State Security courts, and 24 executions. So far in 1998, the organisation has recorded 35 death sentences and 25 executions.

Death sentences issued by criminal and (Emergency) Supreme State Security courts are submitted to the *Mufti* for approval as a routine measure, which usually approves the vast majority of sentences. They are subsequently passed on to the President of the Republic or his nominee for ratification. Final verdicts by criminal courts can be appealed against before the Court of Cassation, but only when it can be proved that there were procedural irregularities in the trial.

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

- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime for which Latifa 'Abd al-Rahim was convicted, but explaining your opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life, pointing out that it has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect, and is brutalizing to all involved in its application;
- urging the President to use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute this and all other pending death sentences;
- 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:

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

Telegrams: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt

Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN

Faxes: + 202 390 1998

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

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Speaker

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and to diplomatic representatives of EGYPT accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.