

PUBLIC

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EXTRA 73/98

Death penalty

7 October 1998

EGYPT 'Attiyat Hussain Hassan (f, aged 56)

On 6 October 1998, the Alexandria Criminal Court sentenced 'Attiyat Hussain Hassan to death. Her death sentence has now been passed for approval to the *Mufti*, the highest religious authority in Egypt. If her sentence is approved by the *Mufti*, she may be executed imminently.

'Attiyat Hussain Hassan, a housewife, was charged with the murder of one of her neighbours.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty, which is applied for criminal offences such as drug use or trafficking and murder, and for offences related to "terrorism", has been used extensively in Egypt in recent years. In 1997, Amnesty International recorded 55 death sentences passed by military, criminal and (Emergency) Supreme State Security courts and 24 executions. So far this year, Amnesty International has recorded 53 death sentences and 34 executions.

Death sentences issued by criminal and (Emergency) Supreme State Security courts are submitted to the *Mufti* for approval as a routine measure. The majority of them are approved. They are subsequently passed on to the President of the Republic or his nominee for ratification. Appeals against final verdicts by criminal courts can only be submitted before the Court of Cassation when procedural irregularities in the trial can be proved.

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

- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime for which 'Attiyat Hussain Hassan 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;
- reminding the government of Egypt of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person";
- 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:

Ms Nayla Gabr
The Human Rights Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt
Faxes: + 202 574 9533

Dr Fathi Sorour
Speaker
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Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt
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and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.

**"EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT TO LIFE, LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF PERSON."
Article 3 , *Universal Declaration of Human Rights***

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>