

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 18/006/2004

25 March 2004

Further Information on UA 370/03 (MDE 18/018/2003, 24 December 2003) and follow-up (MDE 18/001/2004, 15 January 2004) - Death Penalty/ Imminent execution

LEBANON

Fadi Ahmad Mer'eish (m)

Executed:

Ahmad 'Ali Mansour (m)

Badea' Waleed Hamada (alias Abu Obayda) (m)

Remi Antoan Zaatar (m)

Ahmad 'Ali Mansour, Badea' Waleed Hamada and Remi Antoan Zaatar were executed at Rumieh prison in the capital Beirut on 17 January 2004. These were the first executions to take place in Lebanon since President Lahoud took office on 24 November 1998.

Fadi Ahmad Mer'eish is being held in Tripoli prison and could be hanged at any time, following President Lahoud's rejection on 24 March of an appeal for clemency made on his behalf by his lawyer. His final execution order has been signed and he has no right of appeal. Fadi Ahmad Mer'eish was sentenced to death in 1999 for the murder of a 15-year-old female neighbour. He was not executed at the time because the then Prime Minister Salim al-Hoss refused to authorize the execution because he was opposed to the death penalty.

Fadi Ahmad Mer'eish reportedly has a history of mental illness dating back to childhood. Until a few months ago he was apparently held at the psychiatric wing of Rumieh prison for at least two years. He is said to have been declared insane by two private doctors and one prison doctor.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to Article 231 of the Lebanese Penal Code murder committed by someone deemed to be insane should not be punishable by death. The United Nations Commission for Human Rights has repeatedly passed resolutions calling for an end to the use of the death penalty against anyone with a mental disorder. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Thanks to all those who sent appeals on behalf of Ahmad 'Ali Mansour, Badea' Waleed Hamada and Remi Antoan Zaatar. Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic or English or your own language on behalf of Fadi Ahmad Mer'eish:

- expressing sympathy for the family and friends of the young girl who was killed, explaining that you are not seeking to excuse the manner of her death or minimize the suffering caused;
- urging the Lebanese authorities to halt Fadi Ahmad Mer'eish's execution immediately;
- noting that Fadi Ahmad Mer'eish has a long history of mental illness which preceded this crime;
- expressing concern at the reintroduction of the death penalty after five years of a *de facto* moratorium on applications;
- urging the Lebanese authorities to take effective measures to move towards the abolition of the death penalty in Lebanon, as it is the ultimate violation of the right to life and is the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President Emile Lahoud
Office of the President
Ba'abda Palace
Ba'abda, Beirut
Lebanon

Telegram: President Lahoud, Office of the President, Ba'abda, Beirut, Lebanon
Fax: + 961 1 425 391
Telex: 21000
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Rafiq Hariri
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
Grand Sérail
Rue des Arts et Métiers
Sanayeh, Beirut, Lebanon

Telegram: Prime Minister Hariri, Grand Sérail, Sanayeh, Beirut, Lebanon
Fax: +961 1 785 014
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Bahij Tabbara
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Rue Sami Solh
Beirut
Lebanon

Telegram: Minister of Justice, Beirut, Lebanon
Fax: +961 1 862 622 (if someone answers, please ask for a fax tone)
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Nabih Berri
Speaker of the National Assembly
National Assembly
Beirut
Lebanon

Telegram: Speaker of the National Assembly, Beirut, Lebanon
Fax: + 961 1 982 059/ 793 083
Salutation: Your Excellency

and to diplomatic representatives of Lebanon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.