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EGYPT

Grave human rights abuses amid political violence

1. INTRODUCTION

Human rights in Egypt have suffered a serious deterioration in the last 12 months, with mass arbitrary arrests and torture, long-term detention without charge or trial under administrative detention laws, unfair political trials before military courts resulting in death sentences and killings by police, some of which bear the hallmarks of extrajudicial executions. During this period violent confrontations between armed opposition groups and the security forces reached an unprecedented level, and Islamic militant groups attacked and killed police and security officers, a writer known for his secular views, members of the Christian community and foreign tourists. More than 160 people lost their lives as a result.

Against a backdrop of escalating political and sectarian violence, the government adopted sweeping measures in both law and practice - many of them inconsistent with international human rights treaties to which Egypt is a state party. Changes in legislation promulgated in July 1992 included an increase in the number of offences punishable by death (for what were termed "terrorist" offences), and expanded police powers of arrest and detention which increased the likelihood of torture, in the absence of new safeguards. In October 1992 President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak issued special decrees referring two political cases (involving only civilians) to military courts and in February 1993 he referred a further 28 political cases to military courts and approved a new law re-organizing trade union elections. This new law met with extensive opposition, including peaceful token strikes and sit-ins organized by the Bar Association, Medical Syndicate, Engineers' Union and Journalists' Syndicate.

During the past year mass arrests have continued, particularly in Cairo and Upper Egypt, and political detainees have continued to be deprived of basic rights, including access to lawyers and families. Repeated decisions by courts of law to release political detainees for lack of evidence or failure to follow correct procedures continued to be flagrantly disregarded by the security forces with impunity. By early 1993 some political detainees had been in administrative detention for two or three years. Torture of political detainees has continued, but prompt and impartial investigations have not been carried out, despite formal complaints by lawyers and human rights organizations. The number of killings by the security forces increased dramatically in the last 12 months. Amnesty International recorded 29 killings in the course of March 1993 alone.

2. MASS ARRESTS

Thousands of people, including possible prisoners of conscience, have been rounded up and arrested for political reasons under state of emergency legislation in the last few months. Most are members or sympathizers of banned Islamic militant groups such as *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* (Islamic Group) and *Gihad* (Holy War). Many were arrested after clashes between members of these groups and the security forces, particularly in Upper Egypt and in certain popular districts of Cairo. However, in other cases

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people have been detained simply because of their suspected support for the groups. For example, during one week in early December 1992 more than 700 suspected members or sympathizers of Islamic militant groups were rounded up and arrested in Imbaba, a popular district of Cairo. Many are still believed to be held. Later in the same month at least 145 others were arrested in 'Ain Shams, another of the poorer Cairo districts. Hundreds more were arrested at the beginning of 1993. In one day alone, 11 February 1993, 290 suspected members or sympathizers of these groups were reportedly arrested in different parts of the country, and in early March hundreds more were arrested amid continued violence between members of these groups and security forces.

The authorities have made public only limited details about arrests and detentions, although in late November 1992 the then Minister of the Interior, General Mohammad 'Abd al-Halim Moussa, indicated that 1,123 people were being detained at that time under emergency provisions. This figure apparently referred to those held in administrative detention and did not include those held in connection with specific offences. As of early March 1993 the number of those detained under emergency provisions was believed to be at least 2,000.

Following the assassination in March 1992 of a State Security Intelligence (SSI) officer, Major '**Ahmed 'Ala' al-Din**, in Fayoum, nearly 150 members of Islamic groups were arrested. Most of them were released shortly after arrest, but nine people have been held since arrest and are currently on trial.

Members of the Muslim Brothers, a banned but tolerated organization, have also been targeted for arrest in the course of the last 12 months. On 5 February 1992 **Hassan 'Izz al-Din Malek**, the owner of the Cairo-based Salsabil computer company and two of his employees, **Mohammad Khairat al-Shater** and **Taher Mohammad 'Abd al-Mun'im**, were arrested. They were accused of being members of the Muslim Brothers and of preparing to overthrow the government. They denied the charges against them and claimed they had been arrested for their non-violent beliefs or activities. Shortly after their arrests the authorities claimed to have uncovered a conspiracy to establish an Islamic state. In September 1992 a Cairo court ordered the detention of the three men for a further 45 days while investigations into their case continued. By the end of December 1992 all three had been released uncharged. However, 16 others, including three medical doctors, **Mahmoud 'Izzet Ibrahim**, **Mohammad 'Abd al-Latif Tal'at** and **Salah Fu'ad**, were arrested in connection with the same case in late October 1992 and as of March 1993 remained in detention.

In June 1992 40 alleged members of the Muslim Brothers were arrested in Zagazig while attending a meeting with '**Abd al-Rahman al-Rasad**, a former opposition member of the People's Assembly. They were initially accused of membership of an illegal organization but were reportedly released uncharged in August 1992.

3. PROLONGED ARBITRARY DETENTION

For many years arbitrary detention on a massive scale, permitted under state of emergency legislation¹, has been a major feature of the human rights situation in Egypt. The continuing practice of arbitrary detention affects thousands of individuals every year. Although in theory periods of administrative detention are limited, in practice the system of administrative detention is abused by the security authorities in order to keep prisoners in custody without any charges on an indefinite basis, sometimes for

¹ Described in detail in Egypt: Security police detentions undermine the rule of law (AI Index: MDE 12/01/92), January 1992
Amnesty International May 1993 AI Index: MDE 12/03/93

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years. Detention orders are often issued without any signature, with only the vaguest information given for the reason for arrest, such as "a danger to national security". In the absence of further details courts often order the release of detainees. However, the latter are frequently transferred in secret to police stations, the headquarters of the State Security Intelligence at Lazoghly Square or remote prisons where, instead of being released, a new detention order may be served on them.

While in previous years political detainees tended to be held for periods of relatively short-term - though often repeated - detention, and released after courts could find no legal basis for their continuing detention, the current trend is for political detainees to remain incarcerated for many months - or even years - despite court orders to release them. Dozens of cases of detainees held in administrative detention for two or three years have been reported to Amnesty International, with court decisions to release detainees consistently being disregarded by the security police. A number of detainees from Imbaba in Cairo, held since 1990, 1991 and early 1992, were issued with new detention orders in December 1992, along with the hundreds of people freshly arrested during that month, and accused of involvement in terrorist attacks against tourists in October and November 1992, even though they had been in detention during this period!

Hassan al-Gharbawi Shehata is believed to be one of the longest serving administrative detainees. A 31-year old lawyer, he was arrested around January 1989, and charged in connection with two cases relating to disturbances in 'Ain Shams. He was reportedly remanded in custody until his trial and acquittal on 29 May 1990, but has apparently remained in administrative detention since then, despite many court orders to release him. He is married with a young son born in 1990, after he was already detained.

Since mid-1992 there appears to be a policy to disperse detainees throughout the country in prisons which are not normally used for administrative detainees. Relatives are not routinely informed of such transfers and many do not have the financial means to undertake long journeys to visit detainees held hundreds of kilometres away. The hundreds of people arrested in Imbaba in December 1992 were dispersed to several prisons, such as Istiqbal Tora Prison, Abu Za'bal Industrial Prison and various Firaq al-Amn (security brigades) buildings. Those arrested are reported to have included dozens of teenagers, aged 15 and 16, who have been held incommunicado in one of the Firaq al-Amn branches on the desert road between Cairo and Alexandria. Among them were 'Adel 'Abd al-Hadi **Mohammad Salama**, a 16-year-old secondary school student, **Hany Sa'id Mohammad al-Hadi**, **Hany Sa'id Ahmed 'Abd al-Fattah** and **Naser Mohammad Mohammad al-Sawi**. They have reportedly been denied family visits, despite their young age.

4. INCREASED POLICE POWERS

Since 1981 law enforcement officials, particularly those working in connection with security-related suspects or offenders, have subjected political detainees to torture or ill-treatment with apparent impunity. As long ago as 1988 Amnesty International proposed concrete steps to curb, if not eradicate, this practice. A number of those recommendations related to the limiting and monitoring of police powers. None of these measures appears to have been put into practice. Far from limiting them, a series of amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code in July 1992 accord the police even wider powers, while reducing even further their supervision by the Procuracy. Whereas previously the Procuracy was required to authorize arrests in advance, the new provisions allow the police to arrest a suspect without seeking prior authorization from the Procuracy, providing that such authorization is sought within the 24 hour-period

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following arrest. However, there is no obligation to bring the suspect promptly before a judicial authority as required by the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) (Article 9), which Egypt ratified in 1982, and, under the new legal provisions, a detainee may now be held incommunicado in police custody for 10 days before being brought before the Procuracy². Yet it is during this initial period of detention that detainees are most likely to be subjected to physical or psychological torture or ill-treatment to make them confess, give information, or be coerced into agreeing to future collaboration with the security forces.

5. TORTURE

Reports of torture continue to reach Amnesty International³. The most common methods reported are beatings, suspension, burning with cigarettes and electric shocks, and psychological torture. Torture takes place in police stations, the headquarters of the State Security Intelligence at Lazoghly Square and in the premises of the Firaq al-Amn and SSI branches throughout the country. Hundreds of people currently held in Abu Za'bal and Istiqbal Tora Prisons had been severely tortured by the Firaq al-Amn of Asyut, Qena and Dayrut before being transferred to those prisons. Official complaints lodged by lawyers with the Procurator General's Office regarding torture, delayed access to clients, prolonged illegal detention and the failure to implement court decisions to release detainees, remain without response or apparent investigation.

Mahmoud Guhayni al-Sa'dawi, an office employee at the University of Asyut, was reported to have died as a result of torture in the Lazoghly Square headquarters of the State Security Intelligence in May 1992. He was arrested on 29 February 1992 and was held in Istiqbal Tora Prison until 21 May 1992 when he was transferred to the headquarters of the State Security Intelligence in Lazoghly Square. There he was reportedly severely tortured for six days and he subsequently died in the same building. His body was allegedly buried by members of the State Security Intelligence in al-'Alwiya, a small village near Fayoum. An official inquiry by the Procuracy established that his death was due to circulatory and respiratory depression, but apparently failed to shed light on the circumstances surrounding his death. On 13 October 1992 the Egyptian authorities wrote to Amnesty International stating that **Mahmoud Guhayni al-Sa'dawi** died following extreme fatigue when he was about to be released. Two people from Imbaba in Cairo, **Mohammad Hamidou** and **Yasser 'Abd al-Rahim**, reportedly died at the end of December 1992 following torture. They were among hundreds of people arrested at the end of 1992. The results of any Procuracy or other judicial inquiry about the circumstances of their deaths have not been made public.

'Amer 'Abd al-Mun'im, a journalist working for the opposition *al-Sha'b* newspaper, was arrested in July 1992 and detained for a month. He was accused of possessing anti-government leaflets and was reportedly tortured at the headquarters of the State Security Intelligence in Lazoghly Square. He alleged that he had been beaten and subjected to electric shocks on different parts of his body, in particular his left hand. A forensic doctor reportedly confirmed that his scars were consistent with the methods of torture he described. His lawyer lodged an official complaint of torture with the Procuracy but so far no investigation is known to have been carried out.

Ahmed Ibrahim 'Abd al-Galil, Qassim Ibrahim Qassim Qettish, 'Ala' al-Din Isma'il 'Abbas

²In its general comment 8 [16] regarding Article 9 of the ICCPR the Human Rights Committee (the body of experts responsible for monitoring states parties' implementation of the covenant) said that this delay "must not exceed a few days".

³For further information see Egypt: Ten years of torture (AI Index: MDE 12/18/91), October 1991
Amnesty International May 1993AI Index: MDE 12/03/93

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Ramadhan, al-Sharif Hassan Ahmed and **Mohammad Sa'id Mohammad 'Abdu**, who were tried by a military court in Alexandria (see page 7) were all reportedly tortured following their arrest. **Ahmed Ibrahim 'Abd al-Galil** was arrested on 4 August 1992 in Alexandria and was referred, on 29 August, to a forensic medical doctor. He stated that electric shocks were applied on different parts of his body and on the genitals, he was beaten with a stick on his stomach and feet, which resulted in an injury on the lower side of the stomach, towards the right, and an injury on the right side of his back caused by the appliance of electric shocks.

Qassim Ibrahim Qassim Qettish was tortured following his arrest on 18 August 1992 and was examined by a forensic medical doctor on 29 August. He stated that he had been blindfolded and could not identify the person responsible for his torture. His feet and his hands were tied with ropes. He was beaten on the face and electric shocks were applied on different parts of his body. This resulted in injuries on his hands, lower parts of his legs and his back.

'Ala' al-Din Isma'il 'Abbas Ramadhan was also arrested on 18 August 1992 and was interviewed and examined, on 29 August 1992, by a forensic medical doctor. He told the doctor that on 18 August he was arrested at dawn and was blindfolded and taken to an unknown place. There he was tortured to force him to give information on his relations with some of the people involved in the Alexandria case (see below). He was allegedly tied with ropes and electric shocks were applied on all parts of his body, which resulted in injuries on his left arm and on his left knee.

Al-Sharif Hassan Ahmed was arrested on 10 August 1992 and tortured the same day at the headquarters of the State Security Intelligence at Lazoghly Square. He was examined by a forensic medical doctor on 29 August. He alleged that he was beaten with hands and electric shocks were applied on different parts of his body. This resulted in injuries on his back and on the back of his right thigh.

Mohammad Sa'id Mohammad 'Abdu was arrested on 20 August 1992 and tortured during the same day. Methods of torture allegedly included beating with hands and electric shocks on all parts of his body, which led to injuries on his back, left thigh, chest and left arm. He was seen, on 21 August 1992, by the same forensic medical doctor, who examined all five victims mentioned above. It is worth noting that **Mohammad Sa'id Mohammad 'Abdu** was examined by the doctor only one day after his arrest while the rest did not have access to the doctor until at least 10 days after their arrest. (Much longer delays are not unusual, with the inevitable consequence that some scars may have faded or healed in the interim). The doctor testified that physical scars, in all cases, were consistent with the torture they alleged.

6. UNFAIR TRIAL

The judiciary in Egypt has a long tradition of independence. Judges have consistently noted in court cases that political detainees were being tortured for the purpose of extracting confessions and have generally discounted such confessions as evidence. Two incidents have however recently brought into question the independent functioning of the judiciary. The first case is a military trial held in Alexandria at the end of 1992. Eight people, all allegedly members of banned Islamic opposition groups, and all civilians, were sentenced to death by this court on 3 December 1992 following an unfair trial, after the Head of State took the unusual step of referring two political cases (state security cases 391 and 396 of 1992) for trial by military courts by issuing a special decree to that effect. Only one of those sentenced to death, **al-Sharif Hassan Ahmed**, was present in court, the rest were tried and sentenced in absentia. Thirty one others

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were given sentences ranging from life imprisonment to one-year prison terms, and nine were acquitted at the same trial. Charges included membership of an underground "terrorist" organization which calls for the overthrow of the government, planning to assassinate officials, possession of weapons and theft. The 1992 amendments to the Penal Code providing for "terrorist" offences were apparently applied in this case for the first time.

Some of the defendants were arrested in August 1992 in Alexandria and others in September and October 1992. Fourteen people, out of a total of 48, had still escaped arrest when the verdicts were announced. Some of the defendants had reportedly recently returned from long periods of residence in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Yemen. They were all charged with membership of an underground "terrorist" organization, Gihad (Holy War), aiming at trying to overthrow the government, plotting to assassinate some state officials, possessing weapons and theft. At least five defendants were reportedly tortured to extract confessions or information (see page 6).

The trial fell short of internationally recognized standards for fair trial. Defendants were swiftly referred to the Procuracy without their lawyers being informed, who were therefore not present during the initial questioning of the accused. Defence lawyers complained that they had insufficient time to study lengthy case dossiers and to prepare their case and that their requests for a delay in the proceedings were refused. Some lawyers were reportedly harassed by the security police and were searched each time they visited their clients. Journalists, with the exception of those representing semi-official newspapers, were reportedly denied access to the courtroom.

On 8 December 1992 the Administrative Court of the State Council suspended the application of the presidential decree which referred these cases to a military court, ruling it invalid on the grounds that the cases had no connection with Egypt's armed forces. Three days later, on 11 December 1992, the Minister of Justice requested the Supreme Constitutional Court to give an interpretation of the law which he considered to justify the military trials - Article 6 of the Military Code issued through Law 25 of 1966, as amended by Law 5 of 1970, which empowers the President of the Republic to refer some offences to military courts. On 30 January 1993 the court found that under state of emergency legislation the President is entitled to refer offences to military courts as well as specific crimes after they have been committed,⁴ and that the sentences passed by the military court in Alexandria on 3 December 1992 should take effect. Further moves to refer "terrorism" cases to military courts in early 1993 increased fears that there may be many more summary political trials of civilians taking place before military courts, where the rights of the defence appear to be under serious threat, and more death sentences and executions for political crimes. In one such case in March 1993 defence lawyers reportedly withdrew in protest against the lack of time available to them to study the lengthy dossier. Prior to October 1992 most political cases were referred to state security courts which provide for no right of appeal, and their verdicts are subject to the Prime Minister's approval. New amendments to Law 105 of 1980 regarding state security courts, introduced through Law 97 of 1992, permit minors of only 15 years of age at the time of committing an offence to be tried before such courts.

The second case relates to the former Ambassador and Commander of the Egyptian armed forces, General **Sa'd al-Din al-Shazli**, who was arrested in March 1992 on his return from Algeria to Egypt after 14 years in self-imposed exile. He had been tried *in absentia* in 1983 and sentenced to three years' imprisonment for disclosing military secrets about the Arab-Israeli War of October 1973 in a book published in 1981.

⁴Published in the Official Gazette (no 4 bis) on 30 January 1993
Amnesty International May 1993AI Index: MDE 12/03/93

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His whereabouts remained unknown for several weeks after his arrest. In August 1992 the (Emergency) Supreme State Court ruled that the sentence imposed in 1983 should be suspended. However, within days of this decision the Supreme Military Court upheld the three-year prison sentence. The Higher Constitutional Court is still examining the two conflicting verdicts and, a year after his return to Egypt, **Sa'd al-Din al-Shazli** remains held in total isolation in the hospital of a military prison outside Cairo.

7. THE DEATH PENALTY

The amendments to the Penal Code introduced through Law 97 of 1992 significantly increased the number of capital offences provided for under Egyptian law. The new provisions relate to what the law terms "terrorist" offences. In the absence of any internationally agreed definition of terrorism, there are fears that the term could be widely interpreted and lead to both the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience and a marked increase in the number of people executed for political offences in Egypt, particularly if summary political trials continue to take place before military courts (see above). By April 1993 when the new provisions had been in force for little more than nine months, 16 death sentences had already been passed under the new provisions.

The introduction of additional capital offences in Egypt is inconsistent with current world trends to abolish the death penalty altogether or at least to restrict its application, as has been encouraged by various United Nations resolutions, in addition to Article 6 of the ICCPR, to which Egypt is a state party, which states that "sentence of death may be imposed only for the most serious crimes in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime".

In 1993 dozens of people were believed to be under sentence of death in Egypt. Other than the 16 cases referred to above, most were convicted of murder or drug trafficking offences.

8. POLICE KILLINGS

Confrontations between the police or security forces and Islamic militants have been increasingly violent in recent years resulting in a significant number of deaths among the militants as well as some police deaths. Amnesty International is concerned that some and possibly many of the deaths caused by the police may have been unlawful killings resulting from an excessive and unwarranted use of lethal force. Indeed some killings bear the hallmarks of extrajudicial executions - deliberate killings of people who posed no violent threat at the time they were shot dead. 1992 witnessed a sharp increase in such incidents, and this alarming trend continued into the early months of 1993, calling into question the nature of instructions given to the forces charged with effecting arrest, in particular with regard to the use of lethal force, as well as the issue of whether individual police officers are held accountable when using such force. Amnesty International considers it imperative that prompt, impartial and thorough investigations be conducted into all such incidents and that the findings be made public.

In a number of incidents, alleged members of Islamic militant groups were killed while attempting to escape arrest, when, according to official reports, an exchange of fire took place. Other sources have claimed that in some cases no shots were fired by the victims and have also pointed to the absence of injuries sustained by the police in at least some instances. It is impossible to draw firm conclusions on each incident in the absence of detailed and factual information. However, Amnesty International is particularly concerned at reports of the killing of seven men when the police stormed their apartment in

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the village of Manqabad in Asyut governorate in the early hours of 22 August 1992. The seven were: **Mostafa 'Aleywa Mohammad** (aged 17), **Mostafa Hassan 'Abd al-Radhi** (aged 17), **Mohammad Ahmed Mukhtar**, **Khalid Hassan Muzlem**, **Ahmed Hashim 'Abd al-Raziq**, **Mostafa Ramzy Abu Zaid** and **Mohammad Mohammad al-Saghir**. According to reports the position of the bodies of at least some of the seven indicated that they had not been offering any sort of resistance at the time of the attack.

Since the beginning of 1988 a pattern has emerged of leading figures and members of Islamic opposition groups being killed by members of the security forces. The circumstances of some of these deaths suggest that they may have been extrajudicial executions.

In March 1993 police forces reportedly killed 29 alleged Islamic militants. Amnesty International called on the Egyptian authorities to "conduct an urgent review of the use of lethal force by its law enforcement agents". Referring to a senior Interior Ministry official's reported instructions to "shoot to kill" militants who resisted the security forces, Amnesty International expressed its concern that, if these reports were true, such instructions clearly breached international standards relating to the use of lethal force, giving official licence to kill with impunity.

9. ABUSES COMMITTED BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Amnesty International condemns unreservedly deliberate and arbitrary killings committed by armed opposition groups, and has noted with growing concern the increased frequency of such killings by these groups in Egypt since mid-1992.

Victims targeted in recent years have included prominent political figures, such as **Dr Rifa't Mahgoub**, speaker of the People's Assembly, who was assassinated on 12 October 1990, and a number of law enforcement and prison officials.

On 8 June 1992 **Farag Foda**, a writer known for his secularist views and a vocal opponent of militant Islamic groups, was shot dead by two men. Two others were wounded in the attack, including the writer's 15-year-old son. Amnesty International condemned the assassination as a deliberate and arbitrary killing by an armed organization. A statement issued by al-Gama'a al-Islamiya (bulletin no. 7, dated Dhu al-Hijja 1412 / June 1992) claimed responsibility for the killing of **Farag Foda**, among others, accusing him of being an apostate, of advocating the separation of religion from the state, and favouring the existing legal system in Egypt rather than the application of Shari'a (Islamic law). He was killed on account of his opinions.

Attacks on foreign tourists took place in late 1992 and early 1993 resulting in the deaths of three tourists. Once again al-Gama'a al-Islamiya claimed responsibility, stating that warnings that tourists should not visit Egypt had been given in September 1992, and that such attacks would continue until the government agreed to release detained and imprisoned members of al-Gama'a al-Islamiya, some of whom are serving long prison terms, and to put an end to torture of detainees as well as the practice of detaining relatives where police fail to apprehend suspects. Despite the opposition groups' attempts to justify these killings, under the terms of international humanitarian law the publication of threats or warnings provides no justification whatsoever for deliberate and arbitrary killings of individuals who have no role as combatants in a conflict.

10. THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

In May 1992 the Egyptian authorities provided Amnesty International with a 20-page document in Arabic in response to two reports, Egypt: Ten years of torture (AI Index: MDE 12/18/91) and Egypt: Security police detentions undermine the rule of law (AI Index: MDE 12/01/92), published by Amnesty International in October 1991 and January 1992 respectively. In reaction to the numerous cases of torture cited by Amnesty International, the authorities denied that torture had occurred in a single case. They stated that in a number of cases there were investigations into allegations of torture but these investigations had concluded that torture had not occurred. No further details were given about the procedures followed during these investigations, nor the authority which had carried them out. In other cases the authorities said that the alleged torture victims had not filed any complaints to the judicial authorities and consequently no investigation had been initiated, even though their cases had been raised with the government by Amnesty International.

Commenting on Amnesty International's concerns about reports of arbitrary detention, the Egyptian authorities denied that arbitrary detention was occurring and refuted claims that relatives of individuals sought by the police were being arrested and held. They also denied responsibility for the "disappearance" of prisoners after detention, stating that **Mostafa Mohammad 'Abd al-Hamid 'Othman**, whose case was highlighted in Amnesty International's January 1992 report, was released on 28 December 1989. The authorities offered no explanation of what had happened to him subsequently. The response also stated that the Minister of the Interior's practice of challenging court orders to release prisoners was not a "violation of human rights, especially when this right is stipulated by law".

In the course of 1992 Amnesty International received a number of other communications from the government in response to a number of specific cases of human rights violations, particularly torture, prolonged detention and the death penalty, which it had raised with the Egyptian authorities. However, the responses failed to allay the organization's fears that human rights violations were occurring. For instance, on 13 October 1992 Amnesty International received a communication from the authorities stating that **Mahmoud Guhayni al-Sa'dawi** (see page 5) died following extreme fatigue when he was about to be released.

In May 1992 Amnesty International representatives visiting Egypt were received by President Mubarak and also discussed human rights concerns with government ministers and security officials. The President expressed Egypt's commitment to human rights and stated that Amnesty International was welcome in Egypt as long as its work was fair and non-partisan. He also directed the then Minister of the Interior to investigate cases submitted by Amnesty International and to respond to its inquiries. While Amnesty International welcomes the responses it has received from the authorities subsequently, they have failed to respond fully to the questions raised and no steps appear to have been taken to put any recommendations made by the organization for measures to protect human rights into effect, particularly a series of recommendations submitted in 1988⁵. Amnesty International is still waiting for the Government of Egypt to pay proper attention to the human rights situation in the country and is once again appealing for substantial action to halt the downward spiral of human rights in Egypt.

⁵Contained in Egypt: Arbitrary Detention and Torture under Emergency Powers (AI Index: MDE 12/01/89), May 1989
AI Index: MDE 12/03/93 Amnesty International May 1993