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EGYPT: KILLINGS MUST BE STOPPED.

Following the recent murders of at least seven unarmed civilians by gunmen in Upper Egypt, Amnesty International is urgently calling on armed opposition groups to stop these deliberate and arbitrary killings.

"Such human rights abuses should not be tolerated wherever they occur whether they be carried out by governments or by armed opposition groups," Amnesty International said.

On 17 August two farmers, 'Ala' Hassan 'Abdallah, aged 30, and Baha' Mohammad 'Abbas, aged 32, were shot dead by armed men in the village of Beni Obeid near Abu Qerqas. During the same day, another farmer, Fathi Mahmoud Mohammad, was murdered in his farm in Mallawy, also in Minya Governorate. On 24 August another farmer, Sa'id 'Abd al-Muttalib Hussain, was murdered in al-Roda near Mallawy. All their killers were reportedly members of al-Gama'a al-Islamiya.

Armed men also killed a 32-year-old Christian pharmacist, 'Abd al-Nour Qatis Abu Sa'ada, his friend a medical doctor, 'Issam Georgy Shahata and a jeweller, Fahmi Sadeq Tadros, on 29 and 30 August in Minya Governorate.

Amnesty International calls on al-Gama'a al-Islamiya and other Egyptian armed groups to stop the deliberate killing of civilians under any circumstances.

Thousands of suspected members or sympathizers of banned Islamist groups have been arbitrarily detained and 48 have been executed after unfair trials by military courts since early 1993. Amnesty International has repeatedly urged the Egyptian government to stop the torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners and to end the use of the death penalty.

The organization has also repeatedly criticized the practice of administrative detention of political detainees in Egypt.

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