

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 327/93 (MDE 12/14/93, 16 September 1993) - Death Penalty

EGYPT: Mahmoud Salah

Mostafa 'Awni Zaki

Mahmoud Salah and Mostafa 'Awni Zaki were sentenced to death by the Supreme Military Court in Cairo on 15 September 1993. According to *Al-Ahram* newspaper of 25 November, all legal procedures in their case have now been completed and their execution is expected to take place soon.

They were among eight defendants who were charged with membership of an illegal organization which aimed to suspend the constitution, murdering two people, attempting to murder eight others and possession of weapons and ammunition. Four other defendants were sentenced to up to 25 years' imprisonment (three of them in absentia) and two were acquitted.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the last 18 months politically motivated acts of violence by armed opposition groups have escalated sharply in Egypt. Islamic militant groups have committed deliberate and arbitrary killings, which Amnesty International has condemned. Victims have included a writer known for his secularist views, tourists, Copts, government officials and police and prison officers.

The two people mentioned above were sentenced to death by a military court, even though they are civilians. (For further information on this issue see recent Amnesty International document Military trials of civilians: a catalogue of human rights violations, MDE 12/16/93, October 1993). The death sentences are subject to ratification by the President of the Republic, and then review by the Military Appeals' Bureau, also headed by the President of the Republic. Such procedures fall far short of international standards for fair trial, as guaranteed by Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party, which guarantee that everyone who is convicted shall have the right to their conviction and sentence being reviewed by a higher tribunal. The United Nations' Economic and Social Council has urged that these rights be respected in all cases involving the death penalty.

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

- expressing concern that the above two men have been sentenced to death and urging that the President use his constitutional right to grant clemency and commute these and all other pending death sentences;

- urging that civilians should not be tried by military courts and calling for new trials in civilian courts which comply with international standards to which Egypt is a state party (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights);

- expressing concern at the sudden upsurge in the use of the death penalty in Egypt (39 death sentences have been passed by military courts since December 1992 and 17 executions have now taken place), and explaining Amnesty International's opposition to the death penalty as a violation of the right to life and the most extreme form of cruel and inhuman punishment;

- 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
 Muhammad Hosni Mubarak
 President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
 'Abedine Palace
 Cairo, Egypt
Telegrams: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt
Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN
Faxes: 202 260 54 17
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:
 The Human Rights Department
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Corniche al-Nil
 Cairo, Egypt
Faxes: 202 723173

Dr Fathi Sorour
 Speaker
 The People's Assembly
 Magles al-Shaab Street
 Cairo, Egypt

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 January 1993.