

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 12/29/30

4 June 1997

Further information (2) on UA 282/96 (MDE 12/27/96, 3 December 1996) and follow-up (MDE 12/01/97) - Death Penalty

EGYPT Mostafa Mohammad Mahmoud 'Eissa
Al-Numeiry Ramadhan Sayyid Ahmad
'Adel 'Abd al-Ghani 'Abd al-Rahman
Mounir Mostafa 'Abd al-Hafiz (sentenced *in absentia*)
'Abd al-Hamid Abu 'Aqrab (sentenced *in absentia*)

Amnesty International is concerned that the death sentences handed down by the (Emergency) Supreme State Security Court in Cairo on 2 December 1996 on the five individuals mentioned above (two *in absentia*) were ratified by Prime Minister Kamal al-Ganzoury on 2 June 1997. The sentences were approved by the *Mufti*, the highest religious authority in the country, in January 1997.

Their only hope of clemency now lies with the President of the Republic who may commute death sentences within 15 days of their ratification or grant pardons. Amnesty International therefore fears that Mostafa Mohammad Mahmoud 'Eissa, Al-Numeiry Ramadhan Sayyid Ahmad and 'Adel 'Abd al-Ghani 'Abd al-Rahman are at imminent risk of execution.

The five men were sentenced to death in December 1996 in a case involving 32 alleged members of the armed Islamist group *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* (Islamic Group). The defendants were all reportedly accused of planning and perpetrating a series of attacks in the province of Asyut in Upper Egypt in 1993 which resulted in the deaths of at least eight policemen (including high-ranking officers) and a number of civilians, carrying out attacks on trains and public buildings, the illegal possession of arms and ammunition and membership of a banned organization which aims to overthrow the government by force.

During the trial, defence lawyers had reportedly claimed that the defendants had been tortured and had requested that their statements given during police interrogation not be admitted as evidence. This request was reportedly disregarded by the court and no investigation into their allegation of torture is known to have been initiated.

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

- expressing concern that the death sentences handed down on the five individuals mentioned above have now been ratified, and that Mostafa Mohammad Mahmoud 'Eissa, Al-Numeiry Ramadhan Sayyid Ahmad and 'Adel 'Abd al-Ghani 'Abd al-Rahman may therefore be at imminent risk of execution;
- acknowledging the seriousness of the crimes for which the five men were 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;
- urging the President to use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute these and all other pending death sentences;
- expressing concern at the alleged torture of the detainees during interrogation; calling for an immediate, thorough and independent investigation into the torture allegations, for the results to be made public within reasonable time and for anyone found responsible for torture to be brought to justice.

If possible also:

- 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 9808

Dr Fathi Sorour
Speaker
The People's Assembly
Magles al-Sha'ab 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 16 July 1997.