

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 51/98

Threat of imminent execution / Death Penalty 29 July 1998

EGYPT Madiha Hassan Khattab (f), aged 53

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On 22 July 1998 a Cairo Criminal Court sentenced Madiha Hassan Khattab to death.

Her death sentence has now been passed for approval to the *Mufti*, the highest religious authority in Egypt. If her sentence is upheld she may be imminently executed.

Madiha Hassan Khattab, a housewife, was charged with murder. Two of her accomplices, Fawzi Khalaf and Mohammad Khalaf, were sentenced to life imprisonment with hard labour, a third one, Mamdouh 'Abd al-'Azim was sentenced to a one year jail sentence with hard labour.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty, which is applied for criminal offences such as drug use or trafficking and murder, and for offences related to "terrorism", has been used extensively in the country in recent years. In 1997 Amnesty International recorded 55 death sentences passed by military, criminal and (Emergency) Supreme State Security courts and 24 executions. So far this year 41 death sentences and 32 executions have been recorded.

Death sentences issued by criminal and (Emergency) Supreme State Security courts are submitted to the *Mufti* for approval as a routine measure. The majority of them are approved. They are subsequently passed on to the President of the Republic or his nominee for ratification. Appeals against final verdicts by criminal courts can only be submitted before the Court of Cassation when procedural irregularities in the trial can be proved.

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

- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime for which Madiha Hassan Khattab was convicted, but explaining your opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life (as stated in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person), 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 this and all other pending death sentences;
- 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 9533**

Dr Fathi Sorour  
Speaker  
The People's Assembly  
Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt  
**Faxes: + 202 574 9175**

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**