

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 12/42/97

13 August 1997

Further information on UA 169/97 (MDE 12/33/97, 12 June 1997) - Prisoner of Conscience / Health concern

EGYPT'Alaa Hamed, writer

'Alaa Hamed has been released pending a final ruling from the Court of Cassation on his case. However, there are fears that he may be rearrested as a prisoner of conscience should the Court of Cassation decide that there were no procedural irregularities in his trial.

On 25 May 1997 a Cairo Appeal Court upheld a sentence of one year's imprisonment, a fine of 200 Egyptian pounds and the confiscation of his book *al-Firash* ('the Bed'), handed down on writer 'Alaa Hamed by the North Cairo Court of the First Instance in June 1992. He had been charged with producing and possessing, for trading purposes, "printed materials of an indecent nature which encourage immorality".

On 3 August, 'Alaa Hamed and his lawyers appeared before the appeal court to petition judges to suspend the sentence until the Court of Cassation issued a final ruling on the case. In court he reportedly threatened to commit suicide in protest at poor prison conditions. The court accepted his petition and he was released.

'Alaa Hamed was held first in Isti'naf Prison and was later transferred to al-Qatta Prison. He was reported to be in poor health. He was said to be suffering from severe stomach and kidney infections and has very low blood pressure.

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

- expressing concern that 'Alaa Hamed was imprisoned as a prisoner of conscience for more than two months;
- urging that the case against him be quashed.

APPEALS TO:

General Hassan al-Alfy
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Ms Nayla Gabr
The Human Rights Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt
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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 29 September 1997.