

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 12/65/97

Further information on EXTRA 148/97 (MDE 12/61/97, 3 November 1997) - Death Penalty / Legal Concern / Torture 1 December 1997

EGYPT Mohammad Fathi 'Abd al-'Azim, age 27
Mahmoud Mostafa Sulayman, age 24

On 1 December 1997 the Mufti of Egypt approved the death sentences passed on 3 November 1997 by an (Emergency) Supreme State Security Court on Mohammad Fathi 'Abd al-'Azim and Mahmoud Mostafa Sulayman. Amnesty International fears that the two people may be executed within weeks as there is no right of appeal against verdicts by (Emergency) Supreme State Security Courts.

Two other defendants, al-Sayyed Maqboul Fahmi and 'Ali Ahmad 'Ali Ahmad were sentenced on 1 December to life imprisonment by the same court. The four people were acquitted of all charges by a similar court at a trial in 1995, but in February 1997 the Prime Minister ordered their retrial.

Charges against the defendants included the murder of a police officer in Sohag Governorate in 1993, possession of weapons, and membership of an illegal organization, the armed Islamist group *al-Gama'a al-Islamiya* (Islamic Group).

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

- urging the President to use his constitutional powers to grant clemency to Mohammad Fathi 'Abd al-'Azim and Mahmoud Mostafa Sulayman and commute these and all other pending death sentences;
- explaining your opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the most extreme form of cruel and inhuman punishment, stressing that there is no evidence that it is an effective deterrent to violent crimes and that it is brutalizing to all those involved in its application;
- expressing grave concern that the defendants were retried after being acquitted of all charges in 1995, and that this contravenes international standards for fair trial such as Article 14 (7) of the ICCPR;
- expressing concern that, despite a court ruling in 1995 that the defendants' confessions were extracted under physical and psychological duress, no prompt and thorough investigation into these human rights abuses is reported to have taken place and no member of the security forces implicated is known to have been brought to justice;
- expressing concern at the continuing extensive use of the death penalty in Egypt and drawing attention to world trends to abolish or reduce the use of the death penalty, in accordance with Article 6 of the ICCPR, 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

His Excellency General Habib al-'Adeli
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street, Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

Telegrams: Minister Habib al-'Adeli, Cairo, Egypt
Telexes: 21361 MOICM UN
Faxes: +202 355 7792
Salutation: Dear Minister

His Excellency Faruq Sayf al-Nasr
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Midan Lazoghly, Cairo, Egypt
Telegrams: Minister Sayf al-Nasr, Cairo, Egypt
Faxes: +202 355 8103
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

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

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 29 December 1997.