

PUBLIC

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Death Penalty/Torture/Unfair trial

30 August

JORDANYaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar (m) , aged 32

Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar is reportedly in danger of being executed at Swaqa Prison, outside the capital Amman, where he is currently being held. His death sentence must be approved by King 'Abdallah bin Hussein before it can be carried out. Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar was allegedly condemned to death after confessions apparently made under duress and following an unfair trial.

On 3 December 2001 the State Security Court in Jordan sentenced Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar, a Palestinian national and member of the *Hizb al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini* (Palestinian National Liberation Party) in Syria, to death by hanging in connection with the shooting of the Jordanian diplomat Na'ib 'Umran al-Ma'aytah on 29 January 1994 in Beirut. The charges against Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar include "plotting terrorist acts that led to the death of a human being" and "membership in an illegal organization". The Jordanian authorities claim that he is a member of the Fatah Revolutionary Council.

Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar was extradited from Turkey to Jordan in January 2000. Upon his arrival in Amman, he was taken to the Jordanian General Intelligence Department (GID) and held incommunicado until 1 March 2000, when he was brought before a Military Prosecutor. During the interrogation Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar was allegedly severely tortured and forced to confess the murder of Na'ib 'Umran al-Ma'aytah. Reportedly, due to torture, Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar is in need of medical treatment for his eyes and ears. He has denied all charges against him.

In the same case four other men have been tried in absentia and sentenced to death by hanging, among them Abu Nidal, the head of the Fatah Revolutionary Council, who was reportedly found dead in Baghdad two weeks ago, and Jamal Darwish Fatayer, who was extradited from Libya to Jordan in January 2002. Jamal Darwish Fatayer is currently being retried before the State Security Court.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has frequently voiced its concern that the State Security Court, which almost invariably uses military judges and a military prosecutor, does not provide the same guarantees of independence and impartiality provided by the ordinary courts. The Human Rights Committee expressed concern in 1994 that "the State Security Court continues to exercise special jurisdiction" and recommended that consideration be given to its abolition.

Amnesty International does not in any way condone violent crime, but opposes the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Capital punishment has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect and a death sentence is irrevocable.

At least 11 people have been executed since the beginning of the year in Jordan. At least 3 people were executed following unfair trials.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English, French or your own language:

-urging the King to commute the death sentence passed against Yaser Mohammed Ahmed Salamah Abu Shannar by the State Security Court;

- calling for Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar to be re-tried according to international standards for fair trials;
- reminding the Jordanian authorities that confessions made under duress are inadmissible;
- noting that governments have not only a right but also an obligation to bring those who plan or perpetrate violent crimes to justice, but that this should be done in accordance with international standards for fair trials;
- calling for an immediate and independent investigation into the torture allegations;
- to urge the authorities to ensure that Yaser Muhammad Ahmad Salamah Abu Shannar has access to any medical care he may need;
- expressing concern at the number of executions in Jordan and urging that no more executions be carried out and that the government work towards abolishing the death penalty.

APPEALS TO:

His Majesty King 'Abdallah bin Hussein
Office of H.M. the King
Royal Palace
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams:King 'Abdallah bin Hussein, Amman, Jordan
Faxes:+ 962 6 462 7421
Salutation:Your Majesty

Faris Nabulsi
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PO Box 6040
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams:Justice Minister, Amman, Jordan
Fax: + 962 6 464 31 97
Salutation: Your Excellency

Dr Fayez Tarawneh
Chief of the Royal Court
PO Box 80
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Telegrams:Chief of the Royal Court, Amman, Jordan
Fax: + 962 6 463 1452
Salutation:Dear Dr Tarawneh

COPIES TO:

Her Majesty Queen Rania
President of the Royal Commission on Human Rights
Office of her Majesty the Queen
Royal Palace
Amman
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Salutation:Your Majesty

and to diplomatic representatives of Jordan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 October 2002.