

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 18/03/97

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Death penalty

23 January 1997

LEBANON Mounir Salah 'Abboud, Palestinian

Khalid Muhammad Hamed, Palestinian

Ahmad Mundhir al-Kasm, Lebanese

Ahmad 'Abd al-Karim al-Sa'di, alias Abu Muhjin, Palestinian

On 17 January 1997 the Lebanese Judicial Council sentenced to death Mounir Salah 'Abboud, Khalid Muhammad Hamed and Ahmad Mundhir al-Kasm. Amnesty International is extremely concerned that they may face imminent execution.

A fourth man, Ahmad 'Abd al-Karim al-Sa'di, alias Abu Muhjin, was also sentenced to death *in absentia*. The four men were convicted, together with 16 others, of the murder of Sheikh Nizar al-Halabi, former head of the Association for Islamic Charity Projects, in August 1995.

No death sentence can be carried out before the *Commission des grâces (Lajnat al-'Afu)* has been consulted, and approval given by the President.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty in Lebanon has recently been expanded. A new law was passed in March 1994 making the death penalty mandatory for intentional murder and introducing the death penalty in cases of political murder.

Amnesty International has expressed its regret to the Lebanese authorities, and has urged them to review all legislation providing for the death penalty in order to reduce the number of capital offences with a view to abolishing the death penalty.

Amnesty International does not condone violent crimes such as murder and recognizes the responsibility of governments to bring the perpetrators of such crimes to justice. However, it opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the fundamental right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment as recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There is no reliable evidence that the death penalty helps to prevent other serious harm, for example by deterring crimes. The risk of error is inescapable, yet the penalty is irrevocable. No measure that may be devised can ever make it less inhumane.

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

- urging that the death sentences of Ahmad 'Abd al-Karim al-Sa'di, Mounir Salah 'Abboud, Khalid Muhammad Hamed and Ahmad Mundhir al-Kasm be commuted, as well as any other current or future death sentences;
- expressing regret at the expansion of the death penalty in Lebanon, and urging that legislation providing for the death penalty be reviewed with a view to abolishing the death penalty;
- urging the Lebanese authorities to consider signing the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

#### APPEALS TO

1. President Elias Hrawi  
Presidential Palace

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Ba'abda, Lebanon

**Telephone: +9611 865 100/1/2**

**Fax: +9611 425 393**

**Telegrams: President Hrawi, Beirut, Lebanon**

**Telexes: 21000**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Lebanon accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 March 1997.