

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 12/09/99

23 February 1999

Further information on UA 71/98 (MDE 12/15/98, 6 March 1998) - Death Penalty/
risk of imminent execution

EGYPT Manal 'Abd al-Qabel (f)
 Bakr 'Abd al-Fattah Mohammad al-Kumi (corrected name)

Manal 'Abd al-Qabel and her lover Bakr 'Abd al-Fattah Mohammad al-Kumi face imminent execution, after the Cairo Cassation Court confirmed their death sentences on 20 February 1999. They were found guilty of killing Manal 'Abd al-Qabel's husband by the Kafr al-Sheikh criminal court in March 1998.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The death penalty has been used extensively in Egypt in recent years. It is usually applied for criminal offences such as drug use or trafficking and murder, and for offences relating to "terrorism". In 1998, Amnesty International recorded 73 death sentences passed by military, criminal and (Emergency) Supreme State Security courts, and 48 executions. So far this year, at least 10 death sentences have been passed by the Criminal Court and two executions have been carried out.

Death sentences issued by criminal and (Emergency) Supreme State Security courts are submitted to the *Mufti*, the highest religious authority in the country, for approval as a routine measure. They are subsequently passed to the President of the Republic or his nominee for ratification. Appeals against final verdicts by criminal courts can only be submitted to the Court of Cassation on the grounds of procedural irregularities in the trial.

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

- acknowledging the seriousness of the crime of which Manal 'Abd al-Qabel and Bakr 'Abd al-Fattah Mohammad al-Kumi were convicted, but explaining your opposition to the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life, pointing out that it has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect, and is brutalizing to all involved in its application;
- urging Egypt's President to use his constitutional powers to grant clemency and commute these 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;
- reminding the government of Egypt of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life ...".

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

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Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

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The People's Assembly
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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 April 1999.