

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 52/006/2005

1 December 2005

UA 302/05

Death penalty

SOMALILAND

Mohamed Ali Isse (m), aged 33
Ahmed Elmi Samatar (m), aged 40
Jama Abdi Ismail (“Kuutiye”) (m), aged 34
Ali Muse Mohamoud (m), aged 20
Daoud Salah Idleh (m), aged 24
Ali Mohamed Awale (m)
Farhan Abdulle Mohamoud (m), aged 21
Ibrahim Ali Ahmed (m)

The eight men named above were sentenced to death on 14 November by the High Court in the capital, Hargeisa. They had pleaded guilty to the murder of three foreign aid workers. They have the right to appeal to the Supreme Court, and the right to petition the President for clemency.

They were convicted of the March 2004 murder of a Kenyan woman, Flora Cheruiyot, who was working for the German aid agency GTZ, and the 2003 killings of UK nationals Richard Eynington and his wife, Enid Eynington, a couple in their 60s who were teaching in a secondary school in the town of Sheikh. The prosecution reportedly claimed that the eight were connected to an Islamist armed group with links to al-Qaeda.

One of the eight, Ibrahim Ali Ahmed, was tried *in absentia*. His whereabouts are not known.

Seven others tried with them, including three who were tried *in absentia*, were sentenced to life imprisonment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The self-declared Somaliland Republic is the only part of the collapsed state of Somalia to have established peace, government and a multi-party democratic system. Parliamentary elections were held in September 2005, whose final result is to be declared shortly. Somaliland is still pressing for international recognition.

Somaliland, whose legal system is based on the penal code of the former Somalia, retains the death penalty, although local human rights defenders are campaigning for its abolition. In recent years several people condemned to death have been executed, while others have had their death sentences commuted to payment of blood money (*dijya*) through the application of Shari’a law.

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

- acknowledging that the government has a right to bring to justice those responsible for criminal offences, but expressing unconditional opposition to the death penalty;
- appealing to the President to commute the death sentences of the eight men (naming them) if they are confirmed by the Supreme Court;
- explaining that Amnesty International opposes the death penalty worldwide and in all cases as a violation of the right to life, and as a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and therefore contrary to international law.

APPEALS TO:

[There is no postal service to Somaliland, and it may be difficult to send faxes. Copies of letters can be sent to the country's only diplomatic missions (which are not recognized), in the UK, USA and Italy asking for them to be forwarded. Where possible please send appeals by email.

President

His Excellency Dahir Riyaale Kahin
President of the Republic of Somaliland
Hargeisa, Somaliland

Fax: +252 213 8324
+252 252 3848

Email: sl_victory@yahoo.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ms Edna Ismail Aden
Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Hargeisa, Somaliland

Fax: +252 828 3271

Email: slforeign@hotmail.com

Salutation: Dear Minister

DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS:

UK: Mr Osman Ahmed Hassan, Representative of the Somaliland Government
Somaliland Mission, 102 Cavell Street, London E1 2JA, United Kingdom

Fax: +44 207 717 1718

USA: Mr Saad Sheikh Omar Nur, Representative of the Somaliland Government, Washington DC, USA

Fax: +1 301 231 5990

ITALY: Mr Muhiyadin Ahmed Abdi Gabose, Representative of the Somaliland Government
Somaliland Mission, Corso Unione Sovietica 465, Torino, Italy.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 January 2006.