

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 22/002/2003

18 March 2003

Further Information on UA 320/02 (MDE 22/001/2002, 28 October 2002) and follow-up (MDE 22/001/2003, 24 February 2003) Imminent Execution

QATAR

Firas Nassuh Salim Al-Majali (m), journalist

The Amir of Qatar issued a decree on 17 March 2003 pardoning Firas Nassuh Salim Al-Majali and ordering his immediate release. According to press information received by Amnesty International, Firas Nassuh Salim Al-Majali, a Jordanian national, flew back to Jordan yesterday.

Firas Nassuh Salim Al-Majali was convicted and sentenced to death on 22 October 2002 on charges of spying for Jordanian Intelligence. He was reportedly held incommunicado for long periods of time and denied access to a lawyer during his interrogation. Amnesty International believes he may have been a prisoner of conscience, punished solely as part of the diplomatic rift between Qatar and Jordan.

On 24 February an appeal court in Qatar upheld the death sentence passed on Firas Nassuh Salim Al-Majali. His case was then referred to the Amir of Qatar, the Head of State, who has the power to pardon him or to ratify the death sentence.

The decree by the Amir of Qatar to issue the pardon was made during a visit to Qatar by the King of Jordan, King Abdullah, who is believed to have intervened. Many organizations including Amnesty International have campaigned for the release or commutation of the death sentence against Firas Nassuh Salim Al-Majali.

Sincere thanks are due to all those who sent appeals on his behalf. No further action is requested from the Urgent Action network.