



Press Statement

FJP Presents an Urgent Complaint to African Commission to suspend Egyptian Death Penalties

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The Egyptian Freedom & Justice Party (FJP) has submitted an urgent Complaint to the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, requesting its intervention and the immediate suspension of death penalties recently confirmed by the Egyptian Courts.

The Complaint relates to death sentences imposed on 20 people in five separate cases, which have now been confirmed by the Egyptian Courts meaning there is no further right to appeal. Sixteen of those sentenced to death face imminent execution.

The Complaint, which was submitted to the African Commission last week alleges that the sentences have been imposed following a legal process falling far below the standard expected in international and Egyptian law. It details serious evidential and procedural flaws including the obtaining of confessions through torture and the denial of rights of access to lawyers. In addition, it alleges that eyewitness testimony providing evidence that the suspects were elsewhere was not taken into consideration. This included evidence showing that one particular defendant was in fact custody at the time of a bomb attack he was alleged to have carried out.

The FJP have called on the African Commission to intervene and order an immediate suspension to the death penalties, stating, "the Egyptian authorities have entirely ignored the Commission's moratorium on the death penalty by failing to observe the defendants' rights to a fair trial as per the guarantees included in the African Charter and other international treaties".

The death sentences have been imposed in trials following the military coup in 2013 which saw the removal and detention of Egypt's first democratically elected President. Since then the Egyptian military has been widely criticised for suppressing human rights and violating international law to consolidate its hold on the Egyptian government. Former President Morsi remains in detention along with hundreds of others who protested against the coup. In 2014, an Egyptian Court sentenced 529 individuals to death following a mass "trial" that lasted less

than two days and was characterised by similar widespread procedural irregularities. At that time, the FJP's request to the Commission to intervene resulted in the Commission directing the Egyptian authorities to suspend those sentences.

The complaint was submitted on behalf of the FJP by leading human rights law firm ITN Solicitors and international law specialist Rodney Dixon, Q.C.

Tayab Ali, Partner at ITN Solicitors said:

“All Egyptians are entitled to the protections offered by a fair legal process as guaranteed in the African Charter. This cannot be more important than when the punishment for guilt is death. In this case, the defendants did not have a trial that can be remotely described as fair. Now that the Egyptian courts have finalised the death penalties imposed on these people it is imperative that the African Commission intervenes immediately to ensure that an irreversible mistake is not made”.

End

Notes

The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights is a principle section of the African Union

The Freedom and Justice Party is a political party in Egypt. It is the party the of the first democratically elected President, Mohammed Morsi.

ITN solicitors are a leading Human Rights law firm based in London. Further details at www.itnsolicitors.com

Tayab Ali is solicitor advocate and partner at ITN Solicitors www.itnsolicitors.com

Rodney Dixon QC is a barrister at Temple Garden Chambers <http://tgchambers.com/>