



EGYPT CHILDREN

Egypt teenager's death sentence condemned

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Amnesty International today condemned the death sentence handed down by a Cairo military court against a 17-year-old boy, warning that unfair military trials are corroding Egypt's criminal justice system. Ahmed Marous Ibrahim was one of four people sentenced to death by hanging by Cairo's Supreme Military Court for abducting and raping a 17-year-old girl. "The military cannot be judge, prosecutor and executioner in post-uprising Egypt," said Amnesty International. "If justice is truly to be done for this terrible crime, the accused must first have a fair and public hearing before a criminal court and the victim be granted the right to confront the suspects," said the organization. "Sentencing a minor to death is frankly abhorrent and goes against a very clear prohibition in international law". The other three men convicted in the case are Mohamed Tarek Ragheb, 33, Karim Dahrouj Ahmed el-Sawy, 28, and Mahmoud Ramadan Abdul Hussein, 21. Amnesty International is calling for Ahmed Marous Ibrahim and the three others to be re-tried before a civilian court. The organization has also urged the Egyptian authorities to ensure that the girl who was sexually assaulted is offered support, including counselling, and sees justice being done in an open and fair trial. Hundreds of civilians have been tried before military courts since the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), Egypt's governing military body, took power in February 2011. The SCAF has pledged to hand over power to civilians before the end of this year. Amnesty International opposes trials of civilians before military courts, whose judges are serving members of the military. "These courts flout international standards for fair trial, and are grossly unjust. The faith of many Egyptians in the criminal justice system is being sorely tested by military courts". "Law and order cannot be restored with the summary trials and sentencing of hundreds of civilians". Those convicted face an uncertain future. In military trials, the right to appeal to a higher tribunal is limited to hearings before the Supreme Court for Military Appeals (SCMA) which is composed exclusively of military officers. The SCMA only examines the law and its interpretation, rather than the evidence itself or the factual basis of the charges. The right to an effective appeal is a fundamental judicial guarantee. On 1 April, the SCAF announced that it would permit the death penalty for convicted rapists if the victim was under 18. The law would apply to minors under 18 as well. Both Egyptian and international law prohibit the death penalty for minors. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all circumstances as the ultimate form of inhumane and degrading punishment.

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