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Jordan sentences terrorists to death for 2002 murder

By Jamal Halaby
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AMMAN, Jordan — Eight al-Qaida-linked militants were convicted and sentenced to death Tuesday in the murder of a U.S. aid employee in 2002, but six of them — including a Jordanian terror chief — remain at large.

The slaying of Laurence Foley in 2002 stunned Jordan, a close U.S. ally and peace partner with Israel. A subsequent police crackdown exposed a terrorist cell that had allegedly planned Foley's assassination as the first of several attacks inside the Arab country.

A U.S. Embassy issued a statement thanking Jordanian authorities for "bringing those responsible for Larry's murder to justice" after the 10-month trial.

The statement vowed to "remain resolved to continue his work to improve the lives of ordinary Jordanians and to bring the people of our two nations closer together."

Foley, a 60-year-old Amman-based administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development, was gunned down outside his Amman home on Oct. 28, 2002.

Military court president Col. Fawaz Buqour sentenced Abu Musab al-Zarqawi — also known as Ahmed al-Khalayleh — and seven other Arabs to death for conspiring to murder Foley.

Al-Zarqawi is thought to be a close associate of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. He and five others remain at large.

The Libyan man accused of pulling the trigger, Salem bin Suweid, and the driver of the car, Jordanian Yasser Freihat, were in court.

So were three Jordanians charged with conspiracy. Mohammed Amin Abu-Saeed, Mohammed De'mes received terms of six years respectively, while Numan al-Harithi acquitted after the court found there was no evidence implicating him in the conspiracy.

The men had pleaded innocent and told their confessions had been extracted under duress. Sameeh Khreis, lawyer for the defendants, said four men sentenced Tuesday will appeal the verdict.

U.S. officials have offered a \$10 million reward for the capture of al-Zarqawi, who is thought to be building a network of foreign militant groups in neighboring Iraq working on behalf of al-Qaida.

Shortly before the verdict, a man claiming to be al-Zarqawi released a tape calling for Iraq's Muslims to fight Shiites and claiming responsibility for high-profile attacks there.

Jordan has blamed Foley's killing on al-Qaida but prosecutors did not mention the terror group in the initial indictment.

They did say, however, that at least half of the suspects had links with al-Zarqawi, who allegedly provided bin Suweid with weapons and \$2 million to finance the plot.

The indictment said bin Suweid began recruiting militants in Syria in 1997. He came to Jordan in 1999 using a forged Tunisian passport. Amman weapons, explosives and detonators had been smuggled from Iraq in batches starting in June 2002.

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Referendums

Continued from page 1

money from students," McCaig said.

Students also voted "no" to the referendum that proposed making the office of MSC president an elected position rather than an appointed position.

The referendum failed by a 2 percent margin, or 249 votes, said Matthew Wilkins, a junior philosophy major and speaker of Student Senate.

Wilkins said he expects the

office of MSC president to become an elected position in the future, and that the close margin of the election is a signal that students are unhappy about the way the MSC is run.

"I don't anticipate this issue going away because about half of the student body currently feels disenfranchised by the unrepresentative appointment process," Wilkins said. "People will continue to call for a change and I anticipate it being on the ballot again next year."

Elizabeth Dacus, a graduate

student in accounting and current MSC president, said that the referendum did not mean that the MSC president was not a student body member.

"The MSC was founded to run in a way that is different from the student government and our mission is very different from that of student government," Dacus said.

Dacus said that if there had been more publicity about the MSC president referendum, the margin would have been even greater.

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