

# Egypt tycoon gets jail, after death sentence scrapped

Hesham Talaat Moustafa gets 15 years in jail for Suzan Tamim murder in Dubai

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Cairo: An Egyptian criminal court Wednesday sentenced Hesham Talaat Mustafa, one of Egypt's leading real-estate developers, to 15 years in prison for his role in killing a Lebanese pop singer in Dubai.

The verdict stunned his defence lawyers, who vowed to appeal against it.

"This ruling surprised the defence team as it violates the procedures at the criminal court. We will appeal against it once the reasons for the verdict are available," said Hesham Abu Shuka, a key lawyer for Hesham.

"The court did not hear the arguments, which were planned by the 10-lawyer defence team," he added.

The presiding judge Abdul Salam Juma pronounced the verdict, which concluded the trial of Hesham and his co-defendant Mohsin Al Sukkari, an ex-policeman, who was Wednesday sentenced to life for his involvement in the slaying of Lebanese singer Suzan Tamim in Dubai in July 2008.

In May last year, a criminal court sentenced both Hesham, an ex-MP in President Hosni Mubarak's ruling party, and Mohsin to death. The verdict was revoked in March by the Court of Cassation, Egypt's highest judicial authority, which ordered a retrial.

Wednesday's ruling was passed almost six months after the beginning of this latest trial.

Hardly had the chief judge Juma announced the ruling when relatives of the two accused burst out crying and shouting. Some of them clashed with guards, who tried to keep order inside the courtroom on the outskirts of the Egyptian capital.

Hesham's sister, Sahar, was whisked away from the court building in tears.

The court, moreover, handed down an extra three years to Mohsin on charges of possessing an unlicensed gun.

Hesham, 50, was accused of giving \$2 million to Mohsin to kill Suzan after she had reportedly jilted him. Both defendants pleaded not guilty during their trial, which started in October 2008 amid much public interest in Egypt and the Arab world.

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