

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS STILL HELD IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Three Egyptian activists continue to be detained in solitary confinement in Alaqrab high security prison after their preventive detention was renewed on 15 April.

On 15 April, the New Cairo Criminal Court renewed the preventive detention of **Mohamed Mostafa Youssef**, **Mamdouh Hassan Mamdouh** and **Abdelazeem Abdo** for another 15 days. The three activists are accused of insulting the Minister of Interior and attacking the security forces during a protest outside the house of Egypt's Minister of Interior in Nasr City, Cairo, on 29 March. The lawyer of the three activists appealed the decision to renew the preventive detention, but this was rejected on 17 April. According to the court ruling their detention continues to be necessary for the ongoing investigation.

It is feared that their preventive detention is being renewed as a form of punishment for insulting the Minister of Interior. The Egyptian Criminal Procedures Code states that preventive detention should be used if an individual does not have a known address and place of work or is considered to be a threat to national security. As far as Amnesty International is aware, the authorities have not made this argument in relation to the three men.

According to the families, the three activists have said that "it is better to be executed rather than being held in solitary confinement". They are not allowed out of the cells, which measure one square metre, contain a concrete bed and have no lights or ventilation. The activists are asking to be transferred to the Tora Istikbal ordinary prison. Mohamed Mostafa Youssef's wife said that she has to go through a very long process of complicated procedures to be able to visit her husband and is searched in sensitive areas before entering the prison.

The men's lawyer submitted a complaint to Public Prosecutor on 20 April claiming that the conditions of their detention, including their solitary confinement, amounted to torture and that the activists must be referred to a court to be tried. The Public Prosecutor has not yet responded.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urge the Egyptian authorities to end the solitary confinement of Mohamed Mostafa Youssef, Mamdouh Hassan Mamdouh, and Abdelazeem Abdo and move them to an ordinary prison without delay; and ensure they are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment while in detention;
- Call on them to clarify the legal basis for the detention of Mohamed Mostafa Youssef, Mamdouh Hassan Mamdouh, and Abdelazeem Abdo; if they are detained solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and to peaceful assembly, they must be released immediately and unconditionally.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 4 JUNE 2013 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Mohamed Ibrahim Youssef Ahmed

Ministry of the Interior

25 El Sheikh Rihan Street

Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 279 455 29

Email: center@iscmi.gov.eg

Salutation: Dear Minister

Prosecutor General

Abd El-Megeed Mahmoud

Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali

Ramses Street, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 2 577 4716

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign

Affairs for Human Rights

Human Rights and International

Humanitarian and Social Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 2 574 9713

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 89/13. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/018/2013/en>

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On 29 March 2013, a group belonging to the 6 April Youth Movement marched from Al Hay Althamen to the Minister of Interior's house in Nasr City, in Cairo. The protesters chanted claims that the Muslim Brotherhood was infiltrating the Ministry of Interior and marched under a slogan which called the Ministry of Interior "a prostitute who would go to bed with any notorious regime". They also carried and waved with underwear during the protest.

The protest reportedly started peacefully, but led to some incidents of violence between protesters and the Central Security Forces when the protesters used insulting words against the Ministry of Interior and the Central Security Forces responded with obscene gestures. The Central Security Forces then reportedly shot at the protesters with shotgun pellets and used tear gas to disperse them.

Mamdouh Hassan Mamdouh was arrested after an altercation with the head of the security forces. According to information received by Amnesty International, he was beaten during his arrest. Mohamed Mostafa was reportedly trying to engage with both sides to reduce the tension, but was arrested as he tried to intervene in the arrest of an 18-year-old protester. Abdelazeem Abdo was also reportedly arrested while trying to engage with the Central Security forces. According to information received by Amnesty International, he was beaten during his arrest.

On 30 March, the three activists were referred to the Public Prosecutor's office in Nasr City, who accused them of insulting the Minister of Interior and attacking security forces. The prosecutor ordered they be held in preventive detention for four days. They were then transferred to Tora Istiqbal prison. On 3 April, the case was transferred to the New Cairo Criminal Court where their detention was renewed for another 15 days. Since 6 April, the three men have been held in solitary confinement in Alaqrab high security prison.

Name: Mohamed Mostafa Youssef, Mamdouh Hassan Mamdouh, and Abdelazeem Abdo

Gender m/f: Male

Further information on UA: 89/13 Index: MDE 12/020/2013 Issue Date: 23 April 2013