

URGENT ACTION

DETENTION OF AHMED ABDULLAH RENEWED

The detention of Ahmed Abdullah has been renewed for a further 45 days, after a Cairo criminal court accepted an appeal against his release on bail. He is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his human rights work.

On 5 September, a Cairo criminal court ruled that human rights defender **Ahmed Abdullah** is to remain in pre-trial detention, accepting an appeal by the Public Prosecution against a previous court order for his release. A Cairo misdemeanour appeal court had ordered the release of Ahmed Abdullah and four co-defendants on a bail payment of 10,000 Egyptian pounds (approximately US\$ 1,130) on 3 September. Their detention has been renewed for a further 45 days.

Courts have continuously renewed Ahmed Abdullah's pre-trial detention since his arrest on 25 April. He told his lawyers that he was ill-treated upon arrest by the security forces, when an arresting officer struck him repeatedly on the head using the butt of his gun. The authorities have not opened an investigation into these allegations.

Ahmed Abdullah is being detained solely for his peaceful human rights work. He has spoken out against enforced disappearances in Egypt and had been providing advice to the family of 28-year-old Italian PhD student Giulio Regeni, who disappeared in Cairo on 25 January 2016 and whose body was later found bearing signs of torture on the outskirts of the city on 3 February.

Ahmed Abdullah is facing a set of trumped-up charges under the draconian Counter-Terrorism Law, the Protest Law and the Penal Code. Prosecutors have not dropped charges against Ahmed Abdullah's colleague **Mina Thabet**, who was arrested in mid-May and released on bail on 18 June.

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to release Ahmed Abdullah immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly;
- Calling on them to protect Ahmed Abdullah from torture and other ill-treatment and ensure his allegations of ill-treatment are thoroughly, impartially, transparently and independently investigated;
- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to refrain from targeting Ahmed Abdullah and Mina Thabet because of their human rights work, drop all charges against them and end the investigations into their case.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 20 OCTOBER 2016 TO:

Public Prosecutor
Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat Al-Rihab
New Cairo, Egypt
Salutation: Dear Counsellor

Interior Minister
Magdy Abdel Ghaffar
Ministry of Interior
Fifth Settlement, New Cairo,
Egypt
Fax: +202 2794 5529
Email: center@moi.gov.eg or
E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg
Twitter: @moiegy
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Laila Bahaa El Din
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo
Egypt
Fax: +202 2574 9713
Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg
Twitter: @MfaEgypt

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR NASSER AHMED KAMEL ALI, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 26 South Street W1K 1DW, 020 7499 3304/2401, Fax 020 7491 1542, egtamboff@gmail.com, and eg.emb_london@mfa.gov.eg

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fifth update of UA 9/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE12/4669/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The arrest of Ahmed Abdullah and Mina Thabet took place in the context of a widespread crackdown on Egyptian human rights defenders, who have increasingly faced questioning, arrest, travel bans and the threat of asset freezes. Both men are members of the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), a non-governmental organization which has been particularly active on reporting and documenting cases of enforced disappearances in the country.

Between 21 June and 20 July Ahmed Abdullah, director of the board of ECRF, went on a hunger strike to protest against his continued detention and draw attention to the fact that on 21 June Egypt's State Council, an administrative court, had annulled President Abd el-Fattah al-Sisi's decision to transfer sovereignty of two islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia. Ahmed Abdullah was arrested ahead of planned protests in Cairo in April against the president's decision to transfer these two islands.

Mina Thabet, director of the Minority and Religious Groups Department at ECRF, was arrested a few weeks after Ahmed Abdullah, on 19 May, during a raid on his home in Cairo. Mina Thabet and members of his family were ill-treated by Egyptian National Security agents.

On 18 June, Mina Thabet was released on a bail payment of 10,000 Egyptian pounds (approximately US\$ 1,130) after a Cairo misdemeanour court ordered his release on 16 June. The prosecution appealed against this decision to release him but this appeal was rejected by a Cairo court on 20 June. His next court date has not yet been set.

According to their lawyers, both men face multiple charges, including: inciting force to overthrow the State; inciting "terrorist" attacks on police stations; using violence and intimidation to impede the president's duties and powers; belonging to a "terrorist group"; promoting "terrorism" on-line; inciting people to gather publicly in a way that will jeopardize public safety and security for "terrorism" purposes; disseminating news, information and "false rumours"; and possessing leaflets calling for the downfall of the government and changing Egypt's Constitution. Some of the evidence against Mina Thabet includes a diary with a picture of Mary, the mother of Jesus, documents on international human rights law, including on minorities, as well as documents on a legally registered political party called the Bread and Freedom Party.