

URGENT ACTION

AHMED ABDULLAH RELEASED ON BAIL

Prisoner of conscience Ahmed Abdullah was released on bail on 10 September after spending over four months in detention without trial.

A Cairo criminal court ordered the release of **Ahmed Abdullah** and four co-defendants on 10 September against a bail payment of 1,000 Egyptian pounds (approximately US\$ 113). However, prosecutors have not formally closed their investigation.

This decision comes five days after a Cairo criminal court renewed his detention for a period of 45 days on 5 September, accepting an appeal by the Public Prosecution against a previous court order for his release. However, on 7 September, Ahmed Abdullah's representatives were informed that he was due to appear in court again, and a new court date of 10 September was set. On 8 September, he was transferred from New Cairo Police Station No. 1 to Tora Prison, ahead of the hearing.

Ahmed Abdullah was arrested from his home ahead of planned protests in Cairo, as people took to the streets to demonstrate against the president's decision to transfer two islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia. He believes the real reason for his arrest is his work on enforced disappearance and on the case of Giulio Regeni, an Italian student whose tortured body was discovered on the outskirts of Cairo in February this year. Ahmed Abdullah heads the board of the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, which has exposed hundreds of enforced disappearances by state security forces.

Ahmed Abdullah reported being 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.

Mina Thabet, another human rights defender working at the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, was released on 18 June, on a bail payment of 10,000 Egyptian pounds (approximately US\$ 1,130). His representatives fear he may still stand trial on trumped-up charges linked to his human rights work

Ahmed Abdullah and Mina Thabet extended their gratitude to Amnesty International for its work on their case. Ahmed Abdullah said: "Even in my dark cell in solitary confinement at Tora Prison, I never felt alone or forgotten. I knew that Amnesty International members were out there speaking for me and this made me feel safe." He also added: "Together we will bring truth for Giulio Regeni. This is a promise." Meanwhile, Mina Thabet said: "Your solidarity made us feel safe. Thank you for supporting us."

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the sixth update of UA 9/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE12/4782/2016/en/>

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