

URGENT ACTION

DR AHMED ABDULLAH'S DETENTION RENEWED AGAIN

Egyptian authorities rejected the appeal of human rights defender Dr Ahmed Abdullah against the renewal of his detention for a further 45 days. Mina Thabet, a human rights defender charged along with Dr Ahmed Abdallah, was released on bail but still faces charges. The charges against both men are trumped-up and stem from their human rights work.

On 27 July, a Cairo criminal court rejected **Dr Ahmed Abdullah's** appeal against the renewal of his pre-trial detention for 45 days. His next detention renewal session has been set for 31 August. By then Dr Ahmed Abdullah will have spent over 5 months in pre-trial detention.

Between 21 June and 20 July, Dr Ahmed Abdullah went on 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, annulled President Abd el-Fattah al-Sisi's decision to transfer sovereignty of two islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia. Dr Ahmed Abdullah was arrested ahead of protests against the president's decision to transfer these two islands. Dr Ahmed Abdullah 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.

Mina Thabet, another human rights defender working at the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), was released on 18 June on a bail of EGY 10,000 (approximately US\$1,130). His next court date has not yet been set. Both Dr Ahmed Abdullah and Mina Thabet are facing a set of trumped-up charges under the draconian Counter-Terrorism Law, the Protest Law, and the Penal Code. If convicted, they could face up to life imprisonment.

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to release Dr 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 Dr 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 Dr 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 28 SEPTEMBER 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
Arab Republic of 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 fourth update of UA 9/16. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE12/4224/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The arrest of Dr 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 staff 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.

Dr Ahmed Abdullah, director of ECRF, was arrested from his home and ill-treated by security forces ahead of planned protests in Cairo on 25 April. He had been providing legal advice to the family of 28-year-old Italian PhD student Giulio Regeni, who went missing in Cairo on 25 January 2016 and whose body was later found on the outskirts of the city on 3 February. Mina Thabet, director of the Minority and Religious Groups Department at ECRF, was arrested a few weeks later 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 of EGP 10,000 (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.

Dr Ahmed Abdullah has had his pre-trial detention renewed continuously since his arrest. Most recently, he was due in court on 18 July but his hearing was postponed for two days. On 20 July, Dr Ahmed Abdullah had his detention further renewed for a period of 45 days. He appealed against this decision, but his appeal was rejected following a ruling by a Cairo criminal court on 27 July.

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" online; 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.