

# URGENT ACTION

## OVER 150 REFUGEES FROM SYRIA DETAINED

**The refugees are being detained in Egypt following an attempt to leave Egypt by boat. The group includes an unaccompanied nine-year-old boy. Under international law Egypt has a responsibility to protect people fleeing the conflict in Syria.**

Over 150 Syrian and Palestinian refugees from Syria were arrested and detained after their boat, which had left a port in Alexandria and was heading to Italy, was intercepted and pulled back to shore by the Egyptian navy in the early hours of 17 September. Two people were reportedly shot and killed by naval forces during the operation; however, details of these killings are yet to be confirmed and investigations are ongoing. The refugees were taken to the 2nd Montazah Police Station in eastern Alexandria, where they are currently being held. There are reports that another group of refugees from the same boat is being held at a different location.

**Mahmoud Shawkat Ashram**, a nine-year-old boy from Aleppo in northern Syria, boarded the boat with a family friend on the night of 16 September. His mother, father and siblings remained at the port where they intended to follow him on a second boat. Mahmoud Shawkat Ashram's mother told Amnesty International that she had been waiting outside the 2nd Montazah Police Station in Alexandria since his arrest. Despite repeatedly asking to see him, she was told by officers at the police station that she could not as they were in the process of conducting investigations with the refugees. The boy's mother was able to call him on his mobile phone and he told her that he was being held with a large number of people. He also told her that he had seen bodies of the two people that were reportedly shot and killed on the boat.

According to information received by Amnesty International, investigations inside the 2nd Montazah Police Station are being conducted by Egyptian National Security. Refugees face ongoing detention in poor conditions or may be forced to leave Egypt, contrary to Egypt's obligation to provide refugee protection to people fleeing conflicts.

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

- Urging the Egyptian authorities not to deport any refugees from Syria;
- Calling on them to release all of the individuals held for immigration control purposes and allow them access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and in addition, for the Palestinians, access to the Palestinian diplomatic mission, if they wish;
- Urging them to uphold their international obligations, under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, to provide international protection for those fleeing serious human rights violations and the armed conflict in Syria.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 NOVEMBER 2013 TO:**

#### Minister of the Interior

Mohamed Ibrahim Youssef Ahmed  
Ministry of the Interior  
25 El Sheikh Rihan Street  
ab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt  
Fax: +202 279 455 29  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### Prosecutor General

Counsellor Hesham Mohamed Zaki  
Barakat  
Office of the Public Prosecutor  
Supreme Court House  
1 "26 July" Road, Cairo, Egypt  
Fax: +202 2 577 4716  
**Salutation: Dear Counsellor**

#### **And copies to:**

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign  
Affairs for Human Rights  
Mahy Hassan Abdel Latif  
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.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, there are 117,470 refugees from Syria registered or awaiting registration in Egypt. After the military removed Mohamed Morsi from power on 3 July 2013, much stricter entry requirements were suddenly imposed on Syrians entering Egypt, requiring them to obtain visas before travel. Since July the Egyptian authorities have arrested hundreds of Syrians and Palestinians from Syria, many of whom have been held in detention; over 200 of them have been deported to Turkey and Lebanon. On 26 July UNHCR expressed concern about the situation facing Syrian refugees in Egypt, warning of arbitrary arrests amid a "growing anti-Syrian sentiment".

More than two million refugees have been displaced from Syria, in addition to 4.5 million displaced inside the country as a result of the conflict. Half of the some 530,000 Palestinian refugees living in Syria have become displaced by the Syrian conflict and related human rights abuses. More than 1,400 have been killed, the vast majority of them civilians, according to local activists.

Name: Over 150 refugees (men, women and children) fleeing Syria, Mahmoud Shawkat Ashram (m)  
Gender m/f: both

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