

URGENT ACTION

PROMINENT EGYPTIAN ACTIVIST RELEASED ON BAIL

A court ordered the release on bail of Alaa Abdel Fattah and Ahmed Abdel Rahman on 23 March. However, they still face trial for breaking Egypt's repressive protest law, together with 23 other men. The next court hearing is on 6 April. If convicted, the men face up to five years in prison.

All the defendants face charges of "participating in a public gathering without prior authorization", as well as "resisting officials on duty", "thuggery", "destroying property" and "delaying traffic". The security forces had arrested 24 of the men when they violently dispersed a peaceful protest in front of the Shura Council in Cairo on 26 November 2013. They arrested Alaa Abdel Fattah at his home two days later.

The men are being tried solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. If convicted and imprisoned, Amnesty International would consider them prisoners of conscience.

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

- Calling on the authorities to drop all charges against Alaa Abdel Fattah, Ahmed Abdel Rahman and the 23 men on trial with them for participating in a protest.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 MAY 2014 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Hesham Mohamed Zaki Barakat
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Supreme Court House, 1 "26 July" Road
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 577 4716
+202 2 575 7165

(switched off after office hours, GMT+2)

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

Interim President

Adly Mahmoud Mansour
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 391 1441

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Mahy Hassan Abdel Latif
Multilateral Affairs and International
Security Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 574 9713
Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fourth update of UA 322/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE12/013/2014/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

PROMINENT EGYPTIAN ACTIVIST RELEASED ON BAIL

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The security forces arrested dozens of protesters on 26 November 2013, after using excessive force to break up a peaceful demonstration by the No To Military Trials group in front of the Shura Council in Cairo. The security forces beat several of the protesters, their lawyers told Amnesty International. Women protesters also told Amnesty International that plainclothes security forces officers beat and punched them, dragged them and pulled them by their hair. Some of the women also reported sexual harassment.

The security forces released women protesters without charge, as well as journalists and lawyers, but the Prosecution ordered the detention of 24 men for further investigation.

The security forces arrested Alaa Abdel Fattah at his home on 28 November, a day after the Prosecution issued a warrant for his arrest in connection with the protest. His wife said the security forces beat him during the arrest and slapped her. Alaa Abdel Fattah is a well-known activist and blogger, and has been detained many times for his opposition to the authorities. The Egyptian media have recently circulated a letter apparently written by him in detention, calling on Egyptians to continue to challenge the authorities' crackdown.

Ahmed Abdel Rahman was not among those released on 4 December, apparently because the security forces found he was carrying a knife in his bag six hours after his arrest. Lawyers told Amnesty International that he had been carrying a knife because of the nature of his work in a restaurant. The Prosecution has failed to present any evidence that he had used or intended to use the knife to commit any act of violence during the protest. In fact, the protest in front of the Shura Council – violently dispersed by security forces – was entirely peaceful.

A new protest law signed by President Adly Mansour on 24 November 2013 gives the Interior Ministry wide discretionary powers over protests. It requires protest organizers to submit complete plans for any gatherings of more than 10 people to the Interior Ministry at least three days in advance. The law also gives the Interior Ministry the authority to cancel a demonstration or change its route; in effect meaning that demonstrations can take place only with the Ministry's prior authorization. The law also gives the security forces a legal framework for the use of excessive force against any protesters deemed to have committed a "crime punishable by law". Protesters convicted of breaking the law face up to five years in prison and fines of EGP100,000 (US\$14, 513).

Names: Alaa Abdel Fattah; Ahmed Abdel Rahman Mohamed; Ahmed Hossam El Din Mohamed; Jamal Abdullah Zaki; Yahya Mahmoud Abdul Shafi; Mdug Jamal al-Din Hassan; Mahmoud Yahya Abdal Shafi; Peter Jalal Yousef; Mohamed Hossam El Din Mahmoud; Wael Mahmoud Mohammed; Hossam Ahmed Shawki; Mohammed Hassan Ibrahim; Mustafa Yousri Mustafa; Baz Mohammad Rifai; Ahmed Mohamed Nabil Hassan; Tariq Abdul Rahman; Mohammed Salah al-Din al-Hilali; Mohammed Abdul Rahman; Mahmoud Abdul Hameed; Abdul Rahman Atef Bobo; Hani Mahmoud Jamal; Mohammad Sami Mokhtar; Abdul Rahman; Mahmoud Mohammed Abdulaziz; Muhammad Abdul Hakim.

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 322/13 Index: MDE 12/015/2014 Issue Date: 20 March 2014