

URGENT ACTION

TRIAL ADJOURNED AS ACTIVISTS REMAIN IN PRISON

Human rights defender Yara Sallam, well-known activist Sanaa Ahmed Seif and 21 others standing trial for breaching Egypt's repressive protest law, remain detained as their trial is adjourned to 11 October. If found guilty they could face up to five years in prison.

The 23 activists' hearing, which took place at Tora Police Institute, Greater Cairo, on 13 September 2014 with only lawyers and journalists present, has now been adjourned to 11 October. A request lodged by defence lawyers for the provisional release of the defendants was rejected by the court panel, unjustifiably prolonging their detention for a further month.

Among the 23 detained are **Yara Sallam**, a human rights defender who works at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and well-known activist **Sanaa Ahmed Seif**, whose brother, the prominent activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, was released on bail on 15 September.

The 23 activists were arrested after security forces dispersed a demonstration against Egypt's repressive protest law in the Cairo suburb of Heliopolis on the evening of 21 June. According to defence lawyers, it is not clear whether all those arrested had even taken part in the demonstration and there is no evidence to suggest that Yara Sallam was ever present. During the trial on 13 September, the prosecutor presented a video as evidence alleging that she was present at the protest; an accusation rejected by defence lawyers due to the unclear video evidence presented. According to lawyers, audio-visual evidence presented during the trial also showed so-called "honourable citizens", believed to be plain-clothed individuals linked to security forces, using violence against protestors to justify the dispersal of the protest by security forces. One video image showed these individuals with weapons, including a pistol and an iron pole.

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to release Yara Sallam immediately and unconditionally, as she is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for exercising her right to freedom of peaceful expression and assembly;
- Calling on them to immediately and unconditionally release anyone detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly;
- Urging them to ensure the other defendants are released unless they are tried in full conformity with international fair trial standards on recognisably criminal charges that do not criminalize the exercise of their right to freedom of peaceful assembly.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 OCTOBER 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

President

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
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 second update of UA 164/14. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/040/2014/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to testimonies gathered by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, as the protesters tried to march on the Ittihadiya presidential palace in the early evening of 21 June 2014, some groups of men threw broken glass at them and later attacked them, armed with knives and swords. When protesters reached Ismailiya Square in Cairo, the security forces fired tear gas at them, scattering them into side streets. The security forces then arrested around 30 people at the scene, some of whom were captured by so-called "honourable citizens", groups of people who support the authorities.

Some people were released, but prosecutors have remanded 23 of those arrested in custody pending investigation. Security forces questioned the suspects without lawyers present, defence lawyers told Amnesty International. On 23 June, the Public Prosecution remanded 23 people in custody pending investigation and ordered the release of one other person, Amr Ahmed Mohamed Mahmoud.

The Public Prosecution referred 22 of the detainees to trial on 25 June, as well as Amr Ahmed Mohamed Mahmoud. Another detainee arrested on 21 June, Islam Tawfik Mohamed Hassan, is a child, facing trial before a juvenile court in a different case.

Yara Sallam is a human rights defender who currently works at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. She is also known for her work on women's rights, including during her previous job at the NGO in Nazra for Feminist Studies. She had been walking through the area where the protest took place with her cousin and was buying water from a kiosk when a group of men in civilian clothes approached them. The group called the security forces, who arrested both women. They subsequently released Yara Sallam's cousin, but kept Yara Sallam detained. Yara Sallam's questioning has focused on the nature of her work for the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and its management, the organization told Amnesty International.

Yara Sallam and the other women standing trial are detained in al-Qanater Prison. The men are detained in Tora Prison.

The defendants are being tried on charges of taking part in an unauthorized demonstration that endangered public order and security; vandalizing property; making a show of force in order to terrify and threaten the lives of passers-by; and participating in a gathering of over five people in order to disturb the public order and commit crimes.

Under Egypt's Law Regulating the Right to Public Gatherings, Processions and Peaceful Protests (Law 107 of 2013), protest organizers must submit their plans to the authorities, who have wide powers to cancel or reroute proposed demonstrations. President Adly Mansour signed the law on 24 November 2013.

Name: Sanaa Ahmed Seif (f), Mohamed Ahmed Youssef Saad, Bassam Mohamed Aly El Saed, Ahmed Samir Mahmoud Mohamed, Islam Tawfik Mohamed Hassan, Yasser Samir Fadel Sayed, Ibrahim Ahmed ElSaed AbdelRahaman, Salwa Aboud Aly Mehrez, Karim Moustafa Yassin, Yara Sallam (f), Islam Mohamed AbdelHamid Mohamed, Nahed Sherif Abdelhamid ElSaed, Fekrya Mohamed Mohamed, Mohamed Anwar Massoud, Hanan Moustafa Ahmed Soliman, Moataz Mahmoud Mansour Ragheb, Mohamed ElSaed AlSayed, Ahmed Mohamed Abdelhamid Mohamed, Mahmoud Hesham Hassanien AbdelAziz, Mo'men Mohamed Radwan, Mohamed ElSayed Mohamed, Moustafa Mohamed Ibrahim, Samar Ibrahim Mahmoud Ibrahim

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 164/14 Index: MDE 12/051/2014 Issue Date: 17 September 2014