

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS REMANDED IN JAIL, TRIAL IN SEPTEMBER

Human rights defender and NGO staff member Yara Sallam, activist Sanaa Ahmed Seif and 20 other detainees stood trial on 29 June on charges of protesting without authorization, vandalizing property and disturbing public order. The next hearing will be on 13 September and the group will remain jailed while their trial continues.

The 22 detainees on trial were arrested after security forces dispersed a demonstration against the protest law in the Cairo suburb of Heliopolis on the evening of 21 June. Some are bystanders who did not take part in the demonstration.

Defence lawyers had been told that the trial would be held in Heliopolis Court. However, the authorities changed the location without informing the defence. On the morning of the trial, lawyers, families and journalists had to rush from Heliopolis to a court at the Tora Police Institute in Helwan, around 25km away.

An Amnesty International delegate was able to observe the trial. However, security forces did not allow the defendants' families to enter the Tora Police Institute because they had not obtained prior permission.

During the hearing, the judge turned down repeated requests by the defence to order the provisional release of all the defendants. He also rejected their requests to unshackle the male detainees, who had been handcuffed. The judge granted defence lawyers access to the evidence against the defendants, including audio-visual evidence. The judge left without informing lawyers and relatives of the court's decision, leaving defence lawyers unsure of the date of the next hearing. They had to ask court security, who were unsure if it would be on 13 July or 13 September. The lawyers were later able to verify the date as 13 September.

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 drop charges brought against the defendants solely for exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly;
- Urging them to ensure 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 20 AUGUST 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 first update of UA 164/14. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/037/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

According to testimonies gathered by the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, protesters had tried to march on the Al Ittihadiya presidential palace in Cairo on the early evening of 21 June, but faced repeated attacks from groups of men in civilian clothes. When the protesters reached Ismailiya Square, the security forces fired tear gas, 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.

Security forces questioned members of the group 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 works at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. She is also known for her work on women's rights, including her previous job in Nazra for Feminist Studies. She had been walking through the area 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. The security forces later released Yara Sallam's cousin, but kept Yara Sallam detained when they discovered she works for a human rights organization. Yara Sallam's questioning focused on the nature of her work for the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and its management, the organization told Amnesty International.

Those detained also include Sanaa Ahmed Seif, an activist and the sister of well-known activist Alaa Abd El Fattah, who is serving a 15-year prison sentence for protesting without authorization.

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.

Names: 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 (f), Karim Moustafa Yassin, Yara Sallam (f), Islam Mohamed AbdelHamid Mohamed, Nahed Sherif Abdelhamid ElSaed (f), Fekrya Mohamed Mohamed (f), Mohamed Anwar Massoud, Hanan Moustafa Ahmed Soliman (f), 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 (f)

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 164/14 Index: MDE 12/040/2014 Issue Date: 9 July 2014