

PUBLIC

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To: Medical professionals  
From: Medical Office / Middle East Program  
Date: 12 February 1999

### ***MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION***

#### **Prisoners of conscience in need of medical attention EGYPT**

Theme: Prisoners of conscience / ill-health / access to medical care

#### **Summary**

Amnesty International is concerned at reports that the health of Dr 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh 'Abd al-Hady [medical doctor aged 50], Mahmoud 'Ali Abu Rayya [aged 76] and Dr Mahmoud Ahmad 'Omar al-'Arini [aged 73], three Egyptian prisoners of conscience held in Mazra'at Tora prison (south of Cairo) has deteriorated in detention and that they might not be provided with adequate medical care.

Amnesty International [AI] has not been able to obtain detailed information of the men's current state of health, but all three are reported to be suffering from kidney problems. Detention conditions in Egypt are very harsh, and 'Ali Abu Rayya and Dr Mahmoud Ahmad 'Omar al-'Arini might be especially at risk given their age. As prisoners of conscience, AI is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all three men.

#### **Recommended Actions**

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below:

- o introducing yourself as a member of Amnesty International's health professional network
- o explaining that Amnesty International considers Dr 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu Al-Futuh 'Abd al-Hady, Mahmoud 'Ali Abu Rayya and Dr Mahmoud Ahmad 'Omar al-'Arini to be prisoners of conscience held solely for the peaceful expression of their political beliefs, and urging their immediate and unconditional release
- o expressing concern at reports that all three men are suffering from kidney problems and might not be provided with adequate medical care in prison
- o seeking more information on their current state of health and asking for details of whatever medical treatment they are receiving
- o urging that Dr Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh 'Abd al-Hady, Mahmoud 'Ali Abu Rayya and Dr Mahmoud Ahmad 'Omar al-'Arini receive all necessary medical care while they remain in detention in accordance with provisions set out in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, and that they are transferred to hospital if treatment cannot be provided inside the prison.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response. Please send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat [attn: medical team] and check with your national coordinator or the medical team if you send appeals after 11 April 1999.

## ADDRESSES

H.E. Muhammad Hosni Mubarak

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt

'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 390 1998

E-mail: [webmaster@presidency.gov.eg](mailto:webmaster@presidency.gov.eg)

Mr Faruq Sayf al-Nasr

Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice

Midan Lazoghly, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 355 81 03

Mr Ismail Sallam

Minister of Health and Population

Ministry of Health

Maglis al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: + 202 355 15 27

General Nabil Sayyam

Director of prisons

Maslahat al-Sugun

al-Gala'a Street, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 574 5561

General Habib al-'Adeli

Minister of the Interior

Ministry of the Interior

Al-Sheikh Rihan Street

Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 579 2031

**Please send copies of your letters to diplomatic representatives of Egypt in your country or to the nearest Egyptian embassy as well as to:**

The Human Rights Department

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Corniche al-Nil

Cairo

Egypt

Fax: +202 574 9533

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**MEDICAL CONCERN**

**Prisoners of conscience in need of medical attention  
EGYPT**

Amnesty International is concerned at reports that the health of Dr Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh 'Abd al-Hady, Mahmoud 'Ali Abu Rayya and Dr Mahmoud Ahmad 'Omar al-'Arini, three Egyptian prisoners of conscience held in Mazra'at Tora prison south of Cairo, has deteriorated in detention and that they might not be provided with adequate medical care.

Amnesty International [AI] has not been able to obtain detailed information of the men's current state of health, but all three are said to be suffering from kidney problems. Dr 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh 'Abd al-Hady, Secretary General of the Arab Doctors Union, is also reported to suffer from arteriosclerosis and a stomach ulcer. 'Ali Abu Rayya and Dr Mahmoud Ahmad 'Omar al-'Arini might be especially at risk of illness given their age and the harsh conditions of detention in Egypt.

**Background**

Dr Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh 'Abd al-Hady was arrested in October 1995 with 12 other alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood. He was sentenced in November 1995 by the Cairo Supreme Military Court to five years' imprisonment with hard labour and is due to be released in October 2000 [also see: *Prisoners of conscience - 12 medical professionals*, AI Index MDE 12/07/97, 8 April 1998]. Mahmoud 'Ali Abu Rayya and Dr Mahmoud Ahmad 'Omar al-'Arini were arrested on 2 April 1996 together with 11 other alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood. In a grossly unfair trial in August 1996 both men were sentenced to three years' imprisonment on charges of belonging to an illegal organization. They are due to be released at the end of their sentence in early April 1999.

The arrest of Dr Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh 'Abd al-Hady, Mahmoud 'Ali Abu Rayya and Dr Mahmoud Ahmad 'Omar al-'Arini took place in the context of several waves of arrests of alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood between January 1995 and April 1996. All the defendants were tried by the Cairo Supreme Military Court. Although mass trials of civilians have been taking place in Egyptian military courts since October 1992, violating some of the most fundamental requirements for a fair trial enshrined in international law, it was the first time in decades that members of the Muslim Brotherhood had been tried by such a court.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which has renounced violence and has consistently condemned the violent activities of armed Islamist groups, was founded in 1928 and is probably the most influential opposition force in Egypt. Advocating a system of government based on Islamic values and principles, the organization was banned in 1954 but had been tolerated from the late 1970s. 1995 marked the beginning of a governmental program of repression aimed at the organization, and at least 1,000 members or supporters of the Brotherhood were arrested in November and December 1995 in the run-up to and during parliamentary elections. More waves of arrests have been reported since July 1998, and at the end of the year at least 42 members of the Brotherhood were still being held in administrative detention. Amnesty International considers those convicted solely on grounds of membership or support of the Muslim Brotherhood who have not used or advocated violence to be prisoners of conscience.