

---

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 212/94

---

TO: PRESS OFFICERS  
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE  
DATE: 16 SEPTEMBER 1994

AI INDEX: NWS 11/212/94  
DISTR: SC/PO

NO OF WORDS:730

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - EGYPT (please see news schedule below)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

**\*\* Kosovo - 19 September 1200 hrs GMT - PLEASE NOTE EXACT EMBARGO TIME AND AMEND YOUR NEWS RELEASES ACCORDINGLY. SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94**

**Indonesia - 28 September - LAUNCH OF CAMPAIGN**

**France - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94**

**\*\* Algeria - 25 October\*\* - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94**

**\*\* APEC - 3 November \*\* - For further details please see internal note on Indonesia and East Timor sent out in News Service 208/94.**

## TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

**Zaire - 14 September - Targeted for French-speaking news agencies and French-speaking African media only, as well as sent by IS to Reuters.**

**Togo - 15 September - See news service 168/94**

**\*\*Mali - 21 September\*\* - SEE NEWS SERVICE 205/94**

**\*\*Egypt - 20 September\*\* - A news release is being written to go with a document about human rights defenders under threat (AI INDEX: MDE 12/15/94.)**

**Turkey - 14 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94**

**\*\*Iraq - 29 November \*\* - A news release will be written to accompany a document on NGE abuses in Iraqi Kurdistan since 1991.**

**News Service 212/94**

**AI INDEX: MDE 12/WU 04/94  
EMBARGOED FOR 20 SEPTEMBER 1994**

**EGYPT: HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS UNDER THREAT**

**As Egypt's human rights record reaches a new low, lawyers and journalists have become the latest victims - according to a report released today by Amnesty International.**

**"The human rights situation in Egypt has continued to deteriorate as the Egyptian authorities respond to an increase in political violence by Islamist militant groups," Amnesty International said today.**

**That deterioration has been marked in recent months by the targeting of increasing numbers of lawyers and journalists, as well as thousands of suspected members and sympathizers of banned Islamist militant groups who have been arbitrarily arrested and some held in illegally prolonged detention.**

**At least 41 lawyers have been targeted for arbitrary arrest and administrative detention since May, following demonstrations against the death, apparently from torture, of a 32 year-old lawyer.**

**'Abd al-Harith Mohammad Madani -- who had defended many Islamist political prisoners and was a member of the Bar Association and the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights -- was apparently tortured to death after being taken to the Giza branch of the State Security Investigations Department (SSI) in April this year. He was reportedly so severely tortured there that he had to be transferred to hospital, where he died later that same day.**

**Muntasar al-Zayyat is the last remaining lawyer of those arrested in May and June who is still in detention; the rest were all released by 5 July. Although he was given a release order, he remained in custody following a request by the State Security Procuracy which wanted to interrogate him in connection with incidents not related to the lawyers' protests. He is still being held in Istiqbal Tora Prison.**

**In the last few months an increasing number of journalists have also been harassed. Some have been arrested, ill-treated and even imprisoned for their writing.**

**"Although the Egyptian authorities claim that the country's press is free, journalists working for opposition newspapers have been intimidated by the authorities," Amnesty International said.**

**Despite being acquitted by the Supreme Military Court in Cairo on 30 October 1993, freelance journalist 'Abd Al-Mun'im Gamal Al-Din is still detained in the High Security Prison in Tora, where he is denied visits. He was reportedly tortured by state security officers at the Giza branch of the SSI.**

**During the last 21 months, at least 16 people have died in police stations and branches of the SSI, particularly in Cairo and Upper Egypt, apparently after being tortured.**

**When an Amnesty International delegation visited Egypt earlier this year, they were refused any meetings with officials from the SSI, including its director. However, they did meet with a number of Egyptian Government officials.**

**Forty people have been executed and 56 death sentences have been passed since President Hosni Mubarak began to issue special decrees referring civilians for trial before military courts some two years ago.**

**"These military trials are grossly unfair and have violated some of the most fundamental aspects of international law," Amnesty International said.**

**Although two human rights units have been set up by the Egyptian authorities, they have proved to be largely ineffectual. Amnesty International is urging the Egyptian Government to introduce legislative or other practical measures to bring the country's laws and human rights practices into line with the international human rights treaties to which it is a state party.**

**ENDS\**