

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS DETAINED IN EGYPT

Human rights activists, journalists and others have been detained by the Egyptian security forces in an apparent crackdown on independent reporting of the unrest in Egypt. Two Amnesty International staff members and a delegate from Human Rights Watch are among those detained. They are currently being detained in an unknown location. Amnesty International fears that all those detained may be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Amnesty International has information that some 30 people were detained in the premises of the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre (HMLC) after military police took over the premises. Those detained included HMLC staff, volunteers for the Front to Defend Egyptian Protesters, Amnesty International staff and staff from Human Rights Watch. Among the detained are HMLC Executive Director Ahmed Saif Al Islam; Mostafa ElHassan; Ahmed Taher; Mohsein Bashir; Nadin Abou Shadi; Nada Sadek; Mouna Al Masry; Fatma Abed; and Shahdan Abou Shad. Staff from the neighbouring Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) were also reportedly arrested, among them Director Khaled Ali. Amnesty International considers all those detained to be prisoners of conscience.

Staff of the HMLC had been representing protestors arrested in demonstrations. The ECESR had also been supporting an impromptu medical centre in a mosque near Tahrir Square to treat those injured in the protests.

The arrests follow a wider crackdown today on journalists and human rights activists by the Egyptian authorities, apparently in an attempt to stem independent reporting of the continuing unrest. Some journalists have reported being attacked by pro-government supporters. Others have allegedly been detained by the security forces. A journalist for CNN-IBN, Rajesh Bhardwaj, was reportedly arrested and then later released some hours later. Amnesty International delegates in Egypt had also stated that the whereabouts of Malak Adly, a 29-year-old human rights lawyer with the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre, remain unknown since his arrest by Egyptian military on 1 February.

Amnesty International is also concerned about a civilian who has reportedly been referred to trial before a military court tomorrow. Mohamed Atef was arrested today by military police, who accused him of carrying anti-government leaflets. Military courts violate a number of fair trial guarantees, including the right to appeal.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release those detained this afternoon at the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre (HMLC) and the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR), as they are prisoners of conscience, held for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all others detained in relation to their peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression;
- Urging the Egyptian authorities to immediately disclose the whereabouts of those detained and to allow them immediate access to their family members, lawyers of their choice, and to ensure that they are protected from all forms of torture or other ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 MARCH 2011 TO:

Director of Military Judiciary

Major-General Ahmed Abd Allah

Military Judicial Department

Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 2 402 4468 / +202 2 411

3452 (ask for fax)

Military General Attorney

Major-General Medhat Radwan

Military Judicial Department

Cairo, Egypt

+202 2 412 0980 (ask for fax)

Minister of Defence

His Excellency Muhammad Tantawi

Ministry of Defence

Cairo, Egypt

mmc@afmic.gov.eg ; mod@afmic.gov.eg

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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