

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## TESTIMONIAL

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### **Egypt: Guards accused over prison deaths**

According to the prisoners, an inmate named Ahmed Magdi Mursi was killed on February 11 by a bullet which entered his eye while he was standing with others inside his wing.

Another prisoner who spoke to Amnesty International said he was injured on February 12 when prison guards shot at him and five other prisoners who were carrying the body of Ahmed Magdi Mursi, in order to hand it over to members of his family who were waiting outside the prison gate.

An eyewitness told Amnesty International:

“A security officer told us to place the body, which was covered in blankets, near the gate. And the army soldiers positioned outside the prison told us to go back. But the security officer had a higher rank so we continued moving forward near the gate when someone opened fire. We dropped the body and ran for our lives. I was injured in my left shoulder; a prisoner from another wing who was helping us was killed and another two were injured.”

Another prisoner recounted how his friend, Saber Farouq al-Sayyed, was killed on 30 January, a day after most of the killings took place.

“Saber, a few other inmates and I heard the sound of a military helicopter and found that it was flying towards the direction of the prison. We wanted the helicopter (occupants) to realize the seriousness of our situation. We started carrying the bodies of our inmates who fell a day earlier and placing them in the middle of the yard to get the helicopter’s attention.

“After moving a number of bodies, the watchtower guards opened fire on us. We all ran for hiding and then realized that Saber was not among us. I saw him lying down and we waited for around 20 minutes until the shooting stopped and crawled towards him with the help of other inmates and pulled him to safety. The bullet hit the back of his head and he was bleeding heavily. He died shortly afterwards... Saber was due to be released in November 2011. He has already served 11 years in prison... he was not trying to escape.”

Saber Farouq al-Sayyed’s sister, Sahar, told Amnesty International about the loss of her brother:

“Saber used to limp on one leg. For the past four years he’s been walking with a stick because he had an operation to his leg to remove a tumour. Two months before his death, he stopped using the stick but couldn’t get rid of his limp. How could someone in his condition try to escape as the authorities claim?”

Sahar’s voice cracked and she wept saying: “He’s been locked in prison for 11 years... 11 long years and he was due to be released next November. Do those who shot him know this? Do they know that we have been waiting all these years for his release, which was only months away?”

An inmate who is a pharmacist described to Amnesty International how he is providing the only medical care available for those injured:

“I’m a pharmacist, not a doctor. But the need requires that I treat the inmates with whatever is available, and that is only cleaning the wounds with Betadine (an antiseptic solution that kills bacteria). I’m applying Betadine to torn pieces of underwear to bind prisoners’ wounds because there are no bandages.

So far, I have done that to around 45 prisoners without antibiotics. There are cases suffering from wounds caused by live bullets and others who were struck by lead pellets fired from shotguns. Other inmates suffer from diabetes and need insulin injections, supplies of which from the prison clinic have now run out, and others need urgent treatment for liver and kidney complaints. I don’t know what to do for them.”

A woman, who had visited her wounded husband for the first time since the unrest began, described the walls inside the wings as being riddled with bullets.

Her claim is similar to that of at least five prisoners that Amnesty International spoke to by phone who stated that watchtower guards were shooting into the wings and had killed at least two people.