

URGENT ACTION

EGYPTIAN BLOGGER ON HUNGER STRIKE

Egyptian blogger and prisoner of conscience Maikel Nabil Sanad began a hunger strike today in protest against his continued imprisonment. Maikel Nabil Sanad is also refusing to take his medication, without which his health could be at risk.

Twenty-five-year-old **Maikel Nabil Sanad** began a hunger strike on 23 August 2011, in protest against his continued imprisonment in al-Marg Prison in Qalyubiya governorate, North of Cairo. Some 10,000 Egyptians have been tried by military courts since the armed forces were deployed in Egypt on 28 January. While some of those who were tried in military courts have been released on suspended sentences, no date for Maikel Nabil Sanad's appeal has been scheduled.

Maikel Nabil Sanad was arrested on 28 March from his home in Cairo and charged with publicly insulting the army through comments he made on Facebook, and with spreading lies and rumours about the armed forces on his blog. On it, he describes his days inside military barracks in preparation for joining the military service (he was later exempted for health reasons); his conscientious objection to military service; his arrest, detention and torture by the military in February and his criticism of the use of force by the military against peaceful protesters in Tahrir Square.

He was tried in a military court and sentenced on 10 April to three years' imprisonment. When his lawyers and family arrived at the court on 10 April to attend his court hearing they were informed that it had been postponed. However, they later learned that it had actually taken place without any of them being present.

Maikel Nabil Sanad's family told Amnesty International that they are extremely worried about his health as he has a heart and blood pressure condition which requires daily medication. They reported that when Maikel Nabil Sanad was first arrested he was not allowed any visits from his family and lawyers. He also did not receive adequate medical attention and his health deteriorated, leading him to lose consciousness on one occasion.

Maikel Nabil Sanad has been arrested on two previous occasions. He was detained briefly in November 2010 after posting a statement in favour of conscientious objection on his website. In early February 2011 he was arrested on his way to a protest and was detained for two days before being released. Amnesty International believes he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for exercising his legitimate right to freedom of expression.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Call for Maikel Nabil Sanad's immediate and unconditional release as Amnesty International believes he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urge the Egyptian authorities to ensure that Maikel Nabil Sanad receives adequate medical care;
- Call on the Egyptian authorities to try any civilian charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offense promptly in a civilian court in line with fair trial standards, and not in military courts, or release them.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 OCTOBER 2011 TO:

Military General Attorney

Major-General Medhat Radwan

Military Judicial Department

Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 2 412 0980 (ask for fax)

Salutation: Dear General Attorney

Director of Military Judiciary

Major-General Ahmed Abd Allah

Military Judicial Department

Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 2 402 4468 / +202 2 411 3452

Salutation: Dear Director

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has said that 10,000 civilians have been tried by military courts since the armed forces were deployed on 28 January. Others besides Maikel Nabil Sanad have been tried and sentenced in military courts on charges of “insulting the military”. Military trials have also been used sweepingly to include those arrested in protests, workers who go on strikes, those charged with ‘thuggery’, breaking the curfew, possession of illegal weapons, destruction of property, theft or assault.

Appeals before military courts are subject to procedures and regulations of appeals by cassation where by the Supreme Court for Military Appeals examines the law, its interpretation, and procedural issues and not the evidence itself or the factual basis of the charges.

In line with international law, Amnesty International opposes the trial of civilians by military courts. Such trials violate the right to a fair and public hearing before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law, as guaranteed in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party.

Name: Maikel Nabil Sanad

Gender m/f: male

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