

# URGENT ACTION

## TWO PROTESTERS LEFT IN CUSTODY, OTHERS FREED

**The South Cairo Criminal Court has ordered the release of all but one of the prisoners of conscience held since the peaceful protest in front of the Shura Council. Prosecutors are also still detaining well-known activist Alaa Abdel Fattah in connection with the protest.**

The South Cairo Criminal Court freed the protesters on bail of 5,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$726) on 4 December, after overruling the Prosecution's appeal against their release, lawyers told Amnesty International. The men may still face criminal charges for taking part in a protest violating the draconian protest law introduced by Interim President Adly Mansour on 24 November 2013.

Protester Ahmed Abdel Rahman was not among those released, apparently because the security forces found he was carrying a knife in his bag six hours after his arrest. The prosecutor ordered his detention for 15 days. He is held in Tora Prison. Lawyers told Amnesty International that he had been carrying a knife because of the nature of his work in a restaurant. Prosecutors failed to present any evidence that he had used or intended to use the knife to commit any act of violence during the protest. In fact, the protest in front of the Shura Council – violently dispersed by security forces - was entirely peaceful.

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to release Alaa Abdel Fattah and Ahmed Abdel Rahman immediately and unconditionally as they are held solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of assembly and expression;
- Urging them to give both men access to their legal representatives, families and any medical attention they may require;
- Calling on them to conduct independent and impartial investigations into reports that detainees were beaten and sexually harassed upon arrest and while in custody, and to ensure that all detainees are protected from any further torture and other ill-treatment.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 JANUARY 2014 TO:

#### Public Prosecutor

Hesham Mohamed Zaki Barakat  
Office of the Public Prosecutor  
Supreme Court House, 1 "26 July" Road  
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt  
Fax: +202 2 577 4716  
+202 2 575 7165  
(switched off after office hours, GMT+2)

**Salutation: Dear Counsellor**

#### Interim President

Adly Mahmoud Mansour  
Office of the President  
Al Ittihadia Palace  
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt  
Fax: +202 2 391 1441

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

#### **And copies to:**

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign  
Affairs for Human Rights  
Mahy Hassan Abdel Latif  
Human Rights and International  
Humanitarian and Social Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo  
Arab Republic of Egypt  
Fax: +202 2 574 9713

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 322/13. Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/072/2013/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/072/2013/en)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The security forces arrested activist Alaa Abdel Fattah at his home on 28 November, a day after prosecutors issued warrants for his arrest. His wife said the security forces beat him during arrest and slapped her. The security forces then took him to a Central Security Forces camp, which is not a recognized place of detention. The following day, prosecutors detained Alaa Abdel Fattah for four days and then transferred him to Tora Prison, pending investigation.

The 23 men released on 4 December were among dozens arrested on 26 November, after security forces forcibly dispersed a protest in front of the Shura Council in Cairo. The security forces had released women protesters, journalists and lawyers without charge, but prosecutors had detained 24 men for further investigations.

The accused, including those released, are facing charges of participating in a public gathering without prior authorization, resisting officials on duty, thuggery, destruction of property, and delaying traffic. Two of the detainees are apparently also facing charges of possessing a knife without a license and stealing a police radio.

Several protesters said they were beaten by the security forces, their lawyers told Amnesty International. Women protesters also told Amnesty International that security forces in civilian clothes from the First New Cairo Police Station forcibly dragged them on the ground into police vehicles, beat and punched them, and pulled their hair. Some women reported sexual harassment.

Well-known activist Ahmed Maher was also arrested and questioned by prosecutors about the protest, but subsequently cleared. Security forces then arrested him in relation to a different unauthorized protest.

A new protest law signed by President Adly Mansour on 24 November gives the Interior Ministry wide discretionary powers over protests. It requires protest organizers to submit complete plans for any gatherings of more than 10 people to the Interior Ministry at least three days in advance. The law also gives the Interior Ministry the authority to cancel a demonstration or change its route; in effect meaning that demonstrations can take place only with the Ministry's prior authorization. The law also gives the security forces a legal framework for the use of excessive force against any protesters deemed to have committed a "crime punishable by law". Protesters convicted of breaking the law face up to five years in prison and fines of 100,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$14, 513).

Names: 1. Ahmed Abdulrahman Mohammed; 2. Alaa Abdel Fattah  
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 322/13 Index: MDE 12/074/2013 Issue Date: 6 December 2013