

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 12/52/97

30 September 1997

Further information on UA 183/97 (MDE 12/36/97, 19 June 1997) and follow-ups (MDE 12/37/97, 24 June, MDE 12/39/97, 3 July, MDE 12/41/97, 17 July, MDE 12/43/97, 19 August and MDE 12/47/97, 3 September) - Prisoners of Conscience / Fear of further POCs / Fear of Torture

EGYPT Hamdein Sabbahi, journalist

Mohammad 'Abdu, veterinarian

Mohammad Sulayman Fayyad, lawyer

Hamdi Haykal, lawyer

Sayyed Ahmad al-Tokhi, human rights defender

Kamal Khalil Khalil, engineer

and new arrests: Akram Alfy Mikha'il, student

Mostafa Mohammad Mostafa, civil servant

Hamdein Sabbahi, Mohammad 'Abdu, Mohammad Sulayman Fayyad and Hamdi Haykal were released on 25 September 1997. Prisoners of conscience, they had been detained since their arrest on 16 June 1997, reportedly on charges including inciting farmers to oppose Law 96 of 1992, a new agricultural law, by peaceful means such as signing petitions and organizing strikes.

However, other opponents of Law 96 of 1992, including prisoners of conscience, remain in detention, and Amnesty International has learned of new arrests which have taken place in the past week.

Prisoners of conscience Sayyed Ahmad al-Tokhi and Kamal Khalil Khalil are still detained in connection with their peaceful activities in opposition to the new law. Sayyed Ahmad al-Tokhi, a lawyer who works for the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, was arrested on 9 August 1997. Kamal Khalil Khalil was arrested on 30 August 1997, reportedly after attending a public meeting concerned with Law 96.

Amnesty International has received reports of the arrest of Akram Alfy Mikha'il, a student in the faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University, reportedly on charges of distributing leaflets critical of Law 96, and of civil servant Mostafa Mohammad Mostafa on similar charges. The two men are currently being held under 15-day detention orders. Amnesty International does not know where they are being held.

It is reported that at least 180 people, mostly farmers, are currently detained in connection with opposition to Law 96, which raises agricultural rents and permits landowners to evict farmers, abolishing the provisions of the 1952 agrarian reform law which guaranteed security to farmers on rented land. Many others have been arrested and detained for short periods of time without charge or trial; on 20 September 1997 security forces arrested five farmers from the village of al-Sagi'a, North of Cairo, after they held a meeting about Law 96. They were released two days later.

The Egyptian authorities should, as a matter of urgency, release all those detained solely for exercising their right to campaign peacefully against Law 96 of 1992 and ensure that no others are arrested on the same grounds during the law's implementation, which begins on 1 October 1997.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, French, Arabic or in your own language:

- welcoming the release of Hamdein Sabbahi, Mohammad 'Abdu, Mohammad Sulayman Fayyad and Hamdi Haykal, but calling for a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into allegations that they were tortured. The methods and findings of this investigation should be made public and anyone found responsible should be brought to justice without delay;
- seeking information on the current whereabouts and legal status of Akram Alfy Mikha'il and Mostafa Mohammad Mostafa, and urging that they be protected from any form of torture or ill-treatment;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Sayyed Ahmad al-Tokhi, Kamal Khalil Khalil, Akram Alfy Mikha'il and Mostafa Mohammad Mostafa as prisoners of conscience;
- urging the authorities to ensure that no others are arrested and detained for exercising their right to peacefully criticize and protest against Law 96 of 1992.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt

Telegrams: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt

Telexes: 93794 WAZRA UN

Faxes: +202 390 1998

Salutation: Your Excellency

General Hassan al-Alfy
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Cairo, Egypt

Telexes: 21361 MOICM UN

Faxes: +202 355 7792

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Ms Nayla Gabr
The Human Rights Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt

Faxes: +202 574 9808

Mr Raga' al-'Arabi
Public Prosecutor
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali
Ramses Street
Cairo
Egypt

Dr Fathi Sorour
Speaker
The People's Assembly
Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 November 1997.