

# URGENT ACTION

## HELD INCOMMUNICADO DESPITE RELEASE ORDER

On 19 February 2019, a judge ordered the conditional release of Egyptian activist Islam Khalil. On 25 February, the police moved Islam to al-Santa police station to complete his release procedures, but instead of releasing him the authorities held him incommunicado. On 10 March 2018, Islam was forcibly disappeared after National Security Agency officers had abducted him. He remained in arbitrary detention for almost a year facing the trumped-up charges of “membership in an illegal group” and “disseminating false information.” His family believes that Islam is at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment while in incommunicado detention.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi*  
Office of the President  
Al Ittihadia Palace  
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt  
Fax: +202 2391 1441

Your Excellency,

*On 19 February 2019 a judge in the terrorism circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court ordered the conditional release of Egyptian activist **Islam Khalil**. Islam was arbitrarily detained for over a year pending investigation into trumped-up charges of “membership in an illegal group” and “disseminating false information”. On 25 February, Islam was moved from Tora Investigation Prison to a police station in his hometown of al-Santa in al-Gharbiyah governorate, to complete his release procedures. Instead of releasing Islam, the authorities held him incommunicado, refusing to inform his family of his whereabouts.*

*Islam was first forcibly disappeared in 2015 for 122 days during which he was tortured and held in solitary confinement under charges of “membership to an illegal group” among other trumped-up charges. On 10 March 2018, National Security Agency officers abducted Islam while he was visiting Aswan, and his family only learned of his fate and whereabouts on 2 April. Islam’s health has severely deteriorated since his detention, owing to his torture back in 2015 as well as the harsh conditions of detention. His family believes that he is once again at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment and is need of immediate medical attention.*

*I urge you to immediately reveal the fate and whereabouts of Islam Khalil who is being held incommunicado instead of being released as per a court’s order, to drop all the charges against him, and to release him immediately and unconditionally as he has been detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. Pending his release, I urge you to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that his conditions of detention are in line with international standards. I urge you to launch a prompt, thorough, independent, effective and impartial investigation into the ongoing and previous incommunicado detention of Islam and allegations of torture, make the findings public and ensure that all those suspected to be responsible for violating the detainee’s rights are brought to justice in fair trials.*

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 27 February 2019, police officers told Islam Khalil's family and lawyer he was no longer in their custody. Islam has been held incommunicado ever since and his fate and whereabouts remain unknown. His family believes that he continues to be at serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

On 25 January 2019, coinciding with the eighth anniversary of the 2011 Egyptian uprising, Islam and four other prisoners began a hunger strike to protest their arbitrary detention. Islam had been held in pre-trial detention on trumped-up charges since 10 March 2018. Islam and five other co-defendants faced the same charges. While all his five co-defendants, who faced the same charges, were released in September 2018, Islam remained in arbitrary detention. Amnesty International believes his detention and the trumped-up charges brought against him are in retaliation for his political activism on enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention in Egypt.

In the last four years, Islam had been forcibly disappeared twice. In 2015, he was tortured and held in solitary confinement. On 10 March 2018, his family lost contact with him for three weeks when he was in Aswan. The family inquired with the Aswan police station to see if he was being held there, but officers at the station denied his presence. On 15 March 2018, the family submitted a complaint to the public prosecutor about the incident but received no response. The family also inquired with the prosecution in Hurghada, south east of Cairo, and the Aswan prosecution, both of which denied he was in their custody. On 2 April 2018, Islam's family finally learned that he was at Tora Investigation Prison through a person who saw him during a visit. Islam's family said that he was interrogated by the Supreme State Security Prosecution on 1 April 2018 without the presence of a lawyer. According to information obtained by Amnesty International, the prison's administration prevented him from receiving books and food and denied him family visits for a month. According to his family, at one point, he was moved to a cell infested with bugs and was deprived of water and adequate food. They also reported that he was then moved to another cell with detainees who forced him to pray and prevented him from smoking and reading certain books.

In 2015, NSA officers abducted Islam from his home in al-Santa in Al Gharbiyah governorate in Egypt and forcibly disappeared him for 122 days. During this period, Islam was also subjected to torture, solitary confinement, and harsh prison conditions. The authorities consistently refused to acknowledge his deprivation of liberty and concealed his fate and whereabouts. According to his own testimony, NSA officers consistently tried to force him to "confess" to crimes he said he did not commit. On 31 August 2016, he was released after the prosecution ordered his release on bail. He was charged with belonging to the banned Muslim Brotherhood group, "inciting violence", and "attacking security forces."

Islam's family believes that his health has significantly deteriorated as a result of the hunger strike in January as well as the harsh detention conditions.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 26 April 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Islam Khalil (He/him)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/9757/2019/en/>