URGENT ACTION

REFUGEES FACING DEPORTATION TO SYRIA, GAZA

Seventy-five refugees from Syria, including 15 children, have been detained in an Egyptian police station since November 2014. At least 30 of them have been on hunger strike since mid-February in protest. They face being forcibly returned to Syria or the Gaza Strip at any time.

There are 75 refugees from Syria detained in Karmouz Police Station, Alexandria. They include 15 children aged between 10 months and 16 years. They all fled Syria between 2012 and 2014 due to the armed conflict in the country. Although the Egyptian Public Prosecutor ordered that they be released, the National Security Agency within the Ministry of Interior ordered their deportation.

The refugees risk being deported at any time, and psychiatrists have visited them and diagnosed some as suffering from mental health problems. More than 50 of the refugees, including a dozen children and five women, started a hunger strike on 9 February, which 30 of them are continuing. Those who stopped their hunger strike did so on the advice of doctors. Several hunger strikers were given medical help and one of them was hospitalized.

At least four Palestinian refugees from Syria who were held in Karmouz Police Station were deported to Gaza in December.

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

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to provide international protection to all the refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria who are held in Karmouz Police Station, in line with their obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and in line with relevant UNHCR guidelines;
- Urging them to release the refugees immediately in line with the Public Prosecutor’s order;
- Calling on them to ensure the refugees have access to any medical attention they may require.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 10 APRIL 2015 TO:

Minister of the Interior
Mohamed Ibrahim
Ministry of the Interior
25 El Sheikh Rihan Street
ab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 279 455 29
Salutation: Dear Minister

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+3)
Salutation: Dear Counsellor

And copies to:
Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights
Mahy Hassan Abdel Latif
Multilateral Affairs and International Security Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 574 9713
Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

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

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL
URGENT ACTION

REFUGEES FACING DEPORTATION TO SYRIA, GAZA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Some of the refugees now held in Karmouz Police Station were part of a group of 103 refugees who had fled the armed conflict in Syria in 2014, and were left on an island off the coast of Alexandria: the Turkish authorities took 32 of them. Four Palestinian refugees from Gaza, detained in Karmouz Police Station, were deported to the Gaza Strip in December.

The conditions in Karmouz Police Station are reported to be inadequate to protect the refugees from the winter weather, when temperatures fall as low as 9 °C. Children have fallen ill, and one of them has been hospitalized. The refugees have tried to stay warm by keeping the windows closed: this means they have no fresh air. Four refugees, including a 10-year-old child, were treated in hospital on 21 February for a range of health problems, and taken back to Karmouz Police Station a few hours later.

The conflict in Syria and the widespread human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity being perpetrated there mean those who have fled are at risk of serious harm if they are forced to return, and accordingly must be granted effective protection in the countries where they have fled to.

The right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution is enshrined in the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights and protected under the 1951 Convention and the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention. The right to asylum is also enshrined in Article 91 of the Egyptian Constitution and forcible return of refugees is prohibited.


The 75 refugees in Karmouz Police Station are made up of 71 people who fled the armed conflict in Syria in 2014 and another group composed of 4 Syrian-Palestinian refugees who fled Syria between 2012 and 2014.


Gender m/f: both