

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER DETAINED AND TORTURED

On 7 February 2020, airport immigration officers arbitrarily arrested and tortured human rights defender Patrick Zaki George at 4:30 am upon his arrival at Cairo airport on charges including “disseminating false news”, “inciting to protest” and “incitement to violence and terrorist crimes”. In detention, National Security Agency officers questioned and tortured him before he appeared in front of the prosecutor the following day.

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

*Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2577 4716*

Dear Counsellor,

On 7 February 2020, immigration officers at Cairo airport arbitrarily arrested human rights' researcher **Patrick Zaki George** at 4:30 am upon his return from Italy where he had been doing an Erasmus study programme in Bologna.

His lawyers told Amnesty International that National Security Agency (NSA) officers kept Patrick blindfolded and handcuffed throughout his 17-hour interrogation at the airport. They later moved him to an undisclosed NSA detention facility in al-Mansoura. The NSA officers questioned him about his human rights work during his time in Egypt and the purpose of his residence in Italy. During interrogation, NSA officers beat him on his stomach and back, tortured him with electric shocks on his upper body. The following day, prosecutors in al-Mansoura ordered his detention for 15 days pending investigation on charges including “disseminating false news,” “inciting to protest” and “incitement to violence and terrorist crimes”. Prosecutors said they were relying on ten Facebook posts as evidence but did not allow him or his lawyer to review them.

According to his lawyers, a detention report on 8 February 2020 falsely claimed that officers had arrested Patrick from his home in al-Mansoura, while National Security Agency (NSA) officers had held him incommunicado for roughly 30 hours, exceeding the 24 hours' legal limit.

Patrick is currently detained in a police station in al-Mansoura. Amnesty International considers that Patrick Zaki is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for his human rights work and political opinions he has expressed on social media.

I therefore ask you to immediately and unconditionally release him and to open an independent investigation into the torture he has suffered and urgently ensure his protection. I call on you to also ensure that – pending his release – he is granted access to his lawyers, family and medical care; and that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. I finally urge the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all those detained solely for defending human rights and for peacefully expressing their opinions.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Patrick Zaki George works as a human rights' researcher at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), with a focus on gender and sexual minorities. Since August 2019, he moved to Italy to do his Masters in Gender and Women's studies at the University of Bologna.

The arrest of Patrick comes in the context of the post-September 2019 protest crackdown, the largest on dissenting voices since 2014, as his arrest warrant was dated 24 September. He joins human rights defenders [Alaa Abdel Fattah](#), [Mohamed el-Baqer](#), [Mahienour el-Masry](#) who remain arbitrarily detained.

On 20 September 2019, scattered protests broke across Egyptian cities, calling on President al-Sisi to resign. The protests had been triggered by viral videos in which Mohamed Ali, a former army contractor accused army leaders and the president of wasting public money on building luxury properties. In the weeks that followed, Amnesty International [documented](#) how the Egyptian security forces carried out sweeping arrests of peaceful protesters, rounding up journalists, human rights lawyers, activists, lawyers and political figures in a bid to silence critics and deter further protests from taking place. According to Egyptian human rights lawyers, the authorities have arrested at least 4000 individuals in relation to their perceived participation or support of the protests. The authorities ordered the pre-trial detention of at least 3,715 pending investigations over "terrorism" related charges in the largest single protests-related criminal investigation in Egypt's history.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic and English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 26 March 2020.

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Patrick Zaki George (he/him)