

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS JAILED FOR 'SHURA COUNCIL' PROTEST

Alaa Abd El Fattah was jailed for five years on 23 February for leading an “unauthorized protest” outside parliament in November 2013. The Cairo court sentenced 18 others to three-year terms for protesting and one man to five years for carrying a knife.

The Public Prosecution had charged the group of 20 men with breaking Egypt's Protest Law when they protested outside the Shura Council (upper house of parliament), as well as public order offences including “assaulting the security forces”, “stealing a police radio”, “cutting off access to roads” and “interrupting the work of national institutions”. Lawyers for the group have told Amnesty International they are still waiting for the court's written verdict to establish which charges it has upheld. All the charges were trumped-up and politically motivated.

The Public Prosecution had accused **Ahmed Abdel Rahman** of having a knife in his possession when he was arrested at the protest. His lawyers told Amnesty International that he had the knife because he was working in a restaurant. The security forces claimed they had found the knife in his bag six hours after his arrest.

The court also fined each of the men 100,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$13,100) and ordered that **Alaa Abd El Fattah** and Ahmed Abdel Rahman serve five years' probation following their release and that the others serve three years' probation.

Alaa Abd El Fattah has been on hunger strike for over three months in protest at his continued detention. In mid-February he moved to what his family said was a “partial” hunger strike after his health deteriorated.

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to ensure the 20 men's convictions are quashed, and release them immediately as they have been imprisoned solely for their peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Calling on them to give Alaa Abd El Fattah access to any medical attention he may require and to refrain from taking any punitive measures for his hunger strike.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 APRIL 2015 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

President

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
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
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. This is the eighth update of UA 322/13. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/058/2014/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The security forces arrested dozens of protesters on 26 November 2013, after using excessive force to break up a peaceful demonstration by the No to Military Trials group in front of the Shura Council. They arrested Alaa Abd El Fattah, a well-known political activist, at his home two days after the protest. Alaa Abd El Fattah has been detained many times for his criticism of the authorities, including Hosni Mubarak in the last years of his rule and the military authorities in 2011.

All of the men except Alaa Abd El Fattah and Ahmed Abdel Rahman were released on bail the next month. The trial of the group began on 23 March before the South Cairo Criminal Court, which ordered the release on bail of Alaa Abd El Fattah and Ahmed Abdel Rahman.

The South Cairo Criminal Court tried and sentenced all 25 men in their absence on 11 June, jailing them for 15 years and fining them 100,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$13,100). Lawyers told Amnesty International that the court had begun the trial before its scheduled time, without giving the lawyers or defendants any notice. Three of the defendants, including Alaa Abd El Fattah, were arrested when they arrived for the scheduled court hearing.

Defence lawyers appealed and the court ordered a retrial. The judges hearing the case withdrew from it on 15 September, after ordering the release of the three detained protesters.

A second retrial began on 27 October in the Tora Police Institute, with 20 of the 25 defendants present. The court ordered the arrest of the 20 at the end of the first hearing. They remained in detention as the trial continued. One of the remaining five defendants, Abdul Rahman Tarek Abdel Samee Ahmed, was arrested in January 2015. He is detained awaiting a retrial.

The group jailed on 23 February may now appeal to Egypt's highest court of law, the Court of Cassation, to quash the verdict on procedural grounds. The remaining four men who are still at liberty are entitled to a retrial in their presence.

A law on protests passed in November 2013 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 security forces sweeping powers to disperse protests.

Names: Alaa Abd El Fattah; Ahmed Abdel Rahman; Mahmoud Yahya Abdal Shafi; Yahya Mahmoud Abdul Shafi; Peter Jalal; Abdel Hamid Mahmoud Mohamed Kassem; Mohamed Sami Mokhtar; Mohamed Hosni Imam Ibrahim; Abdel Rahman Atef Said Ali; Ahmed Mohamed Nabil Hassan; Mohamed Abdel Rahman Mohamed Hassan; Abdallah Gamal Zaki Mohamed; Mamdouh Gamal Eldin Hassan Abdel Wahab; Mohamed Hossam Eldin Mahmoud Ali; Mohamed Al Refaie Youssef; Mostafa Yousry Mostafa Abdel Wahab; Mahmoud Mohamed Abdel Aziz Awad; Mohamed Abdel Kereem Taymoor Abdel Aziz; Hany Mahmoud Mohamed Elgaml; Salah Eldin Mohamed Hamed El Helaly; Ahmed Hossam El Din Mohamed; Abdel Rahman Said Mohamed Elsaid; Wael Mahmoud Mohammed Metwally; Hossam Ahmed Shawki; Abdul Rahman Tarek Abdel Samee Ahmed

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 322/13 Index: MDE 12/1070/2015 Issue Date: 25 February 2015