

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST ARRESTED FOR HIS WORK

Journalist Ismail Alexandrani was arrested on 29 November at Egypt's Hurghada International Airport. On 1 December a prosecutor ordered him to be detained for 15 days to investigate allegations that he had spread "false news and rumours" and belonged to a "terrorist" group.

Ismail Alexandrani, an Egyptian academic and journalist, was stopped and questioned at Hurghada International Airport on 29 November. He had just arrived from Berlin, where he had attended a conference on "counter-terrorism" and presented a paper on the situation in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

Ismail Alexandrani was able to call a friend to say he had been stopped, but about an hour later all communication with him stopped, his wife told Amnesty International. He was then questioned by National Security at Hurghada without a lawyer for 12 hours about his travel outside Egypt, she said.

On 1 December, the state security prosecutor in Cairo questioned Ismail Alexandrani for over eight hours about his journalism and academic research. The prosecutor ordered him to be detained for 15 days for further investigation, but without formally charging him with any criminal offence. Lawyers from the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR), who attended the questioning, have said that the journalist faces charges of "spreading false news and rumours", as well as "belonging to a terrorist group and promoting its ideas." The prosecutor had been expected to resume the investigations today, but has postponed them until 7 December.

Amnesty International believes that Ismail Alexandrani has been targeted because of his academic and journalistic work which has been at times critical of the authorities' political and human rights records.

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to release Ismail Alexandrani immediately, as he has been detained for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to cease any criminal investigations based solely on his peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that he has regular access to his family and legal representatives of his choice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 14 JANUARY 2016 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat Al-Rihab
New Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

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
Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg
Twitter: @AlsisiOfficial

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
Twitter: @MfaEgypt

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**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ismail Alexandrani is a freelance journalist and academic whose research focuses on Egyptian politics and the situation in the Sinai Peninsula, which has seen an increase in attacks by armed groups targeting both civilians and security forces, as well as operations by the army to combat such groups.

Lawyers for ECESR have said that Ismail Alexandrani faces charges of belonging to a “terrorist” group that wants to undermine Egypt’s laws, constitution and state institutions, as well as encroaching on the personal freedom of its citizens and the state’s “national unity” and “social peace”. Prosecutors frequently use such charges to target those they believe are associated with the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which Egypt’s government has said it considers to be a “terrorist organization”.

Egypt’s Public Prosecution has frequently brought charges of “spreading false news” against journalists critical of the government’s political and human rights record. Amnesty International believes that, in the absence of deliberate malicious intent and harmful consequences, “spreading false news” should not be a criminal offence; and, in any event, imprisonment on that basis is a disproportionate restriction on the right to freedom of expression. The organization has repeatedly called on Egypt to uphold its international obligation to guarantee freedom of expression, as a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Name: Ismail Alexandrani

Gender m/f: m

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