

URGENT ACTION

PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE'S DETENTION EXTENDED

With 711 days already spent languishing in pre-trial detention, prisoner of conscience Mahmoud Hussein's detention was once again extended for a further 45 days on 6 January.

Prisoner of conscience **Mahmoud Mohamed Ahmed Hussein**, who turned 20 while in detention last week, has been ordered by a Cairo court to remain in pre-trial detention, without charge, for another 45 days. Having already spent 711 days in jail, this would potentially increase his pre-trial detention period to 756 days – past the maximum two-year period allowed under Egyptian law.

The limit to detention without charge or sentence on suspicion of offences that could lead to life imprisonment or the death penalty is two years, according to Article 143 of Egypt's Code of Criminal Procedure. On 25 January, Mahmoud Hussein will have reached this threshold, and the authorities will be obliged to immediately release him.

Mahmoud Hussein was arrested by police on 25 January 2014 on a public bus in Cairo on his way home for wearing a t-shirt with the words and logo of the "Nation Without Torture Campaign" and a scarf with the logo of the "25 January Revolution". He was tortured into "confessing" to crimes he says he did not commit and has been beaten in detention.

He is facing trumped-up charges that include belonging to a banned group, possessing weapons, and receiving money to protest.

Please write immediately in Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to release Mahmoud Mohamed Ahmed Hussein immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience, held solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that he is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated while in detention;
- Urging them to order a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into his allegations of torture and ensure that anyone responsible is brought to justice in a fair trial without resort to the death penalty.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 17 FEBRUARY 2016 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat Al-Rihab
New Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 577 4716

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. This is the sixth update of UA 286/14. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/2889/2015/en/

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mahmoud Hussein regularly writes letters and does drawings for other political detainees being held in different prisons across Egypt. He has written twice to Amnesty International, and has sent a drawing. His family say that he is now being denied by prison authorities the tools that will allow him to continue to draw, as well as winter clothing.

The 20-year-old student last had his detention order renewed for 45 days on 16 November 2015. The last time Mahmoud Hussein was beaten in prison was on 14 July when he was being held in Cairo's Appeals Prison. According to his brother, two prison guards punched him in the stomach and slapped him on the face when he insisted on collecting his belongings after he was told he was being transferred to a different prison.

This was the second time Mahmoud Hussein had been beaten up in the Cairo Appeals Prison, his family said. The first instance had been one year earlier. His family say they have filed complaints with the Public Prosecutor's Office about his allegations of torture and other ill-treatment. The office said it had opened an investigation into the complaints, but the family have not yet been informed of any findings, according to Mahmoud Hussein's brother and his lawyer. Mahmoud Hussein was moved to Cairo's Tora Investigations Prison on 25 July.

Mahmoud Hussein was arrested on 25 January 2014, the third anniversary of the 2011 Egyptian uprising, after attending a protest in central Cairo against Muslim Brotherhood and military rule. He was on a bus on his way home when the security forces stopped the vehicle at a checkpoint in the north-eastern suburb of El-Marg. He was picked out for wearing a T-shirt with the "Nation Without Torture Campaign" logo and a scarf with the "25 January Revolution" logo.

Upon arrest, Mahmoud Hussein asked why he was being arrested but was then beaten by five plain-clothed police officers, who dragged him by his feet to a small police station nearby, according to his family and his lawyer. They beat Mahmoud Hussein for 30 minutes, and then took him to El-Marg police station, where they continued beating him with their fists and batons for around an hour. This practice is known in Egyptian police stations and prisons as a "welcoming party".

Mahmoud Hussein was later put in a cell with around 50 other people, according to his lawyer. The cell, in the police station, is only designed to hold 16 detainees. His cellmates beat and threatened him, on the instructions of the police officers, for some three hours until he was taken to National Security officers in the police station for interrogation, according to Mahmoud Hussein's testimony to his lawyer and his brother. A National Security officer told Mahmoud Hussein that he would dictate a "confession" and videotape him reading this aloud. Mahmoud Hussein refused and said he would not confess to crimes he had not committed. He was then beaten and given electric shocks to his hands, back and testicles for four hours. After this, he told the National Security officer that he would "confess" to whatever they asked him to stop the torture. The National Security officer videotaped Mahmoud Hussein "confessing" to trumped-up accusations of "belonging to a banned group", "possessing Molotov cocktails and hand grenades", "unauthorised protesting" and "receiving money to protest".

Mahmoud Hussein was taken for questioning the next day by the State Security Prosecution in New Cairo, which is meant to investigate offences related to national security. He denied all the accusations and said he had been tortured to "confess", but the prosecutor did not refer him for forensic examination or order any investigation into his torture allegations. Mahmoud Hussein stayed in El-Marg police station for six days and was later transferred to Abu Zaabal Prison where he was beaten upon arrival. In May 2014, he was transferred to the Cairo Appeal Prison. He is now at Cairo's Tora Investigations Prison.

Name: Mahmoud Mohamed Ahmed Hussein

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 286/14 Index: MDE 12/3153/2016 Issue Date: 6 January 2016