

URGENT ACTION

THREE ACTIVISTS ARRESTED BEFORE ANNIVERSARY

Dr Taher Mokhtar and two other activists were arrested in Cairo on 14 January, ahead of the fifth anniversary of Egypt's "25 January Revolution". They have been accused of "being in possession of leaflets calling for the overthrow of the regime", and other offences. Their pre-trial detention was renewed for 15 days on 17 January.

Dr Taher Mokhtar, who is a member of Egypt's Doctors' Syndicate following up on detainees' health conditions, computer programmer **Hossameldine Hammad** and law student **Ahmed Mohamed Hassan** were arrested on 14 January by plainclothes police, at their apartment in central Cairo. They have been held since then in Abdeen Police Station on accusations that include "being in possession of leaflets calling for changing the constitution and overthrowing the regime" and "inciting protests" and "participating in protests and violence since 25 January 2011".

The three were interrogated by National Security officers at Abdeen Police Station for nine hours without a lawyer present before the accusations were made, according to the defence lawyer who is acting for them. The authorities are tightening security across the country ahead of the fifth anniversary of Egypt's "25 January Revolution".

After the three had been interrogated, they were questioned on 15 January by Abdeen's Public Prosecution. Their detention at the police station had been for four days, but was renewed on 17 January for 15 days. According to the lawyer, a National Security report dated 13 January says three individuals were promoting ideas and taking advantage of individual acts by police officers to incite citizens to protest on the 25 January anniversary. The evidence presented so far includes a voltmeter device, a box of electronic components, computers, mobile phones, Syndicate papers, one titled "medical negligence in prison is a crime" and others that call for reform of the health sector, and handwritten notes with words such as "peaceful", "military coup" and "we're sitting in, we won't leave".

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to halt the investigation of the three activists (naming them) on accusations that stem from the peaceful exercise of their human rights and release them immediately;
- Urging them to ensure that the three are humanely treated and have access to visits by their lawyers and families, and to medical care if needed.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 3 FEBRUARY 2016 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Nabil Sadek

Office of the Public Prosecutor

Madinat al-Rehab, New Cairo

Egypt

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

National Council for Human Rights

President

Mohamed Fayek

National Council for Human Rights

69 Giza St. – next to the Saudi Embassy

Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 3762 4852

Fax: +202 3762 4229

Email: Nchr@nchr.org.eg

Twitter: [@nchregypt](https://twitter.com/nchregypt)

Salutation: Dear Mr Fayek

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign

Affairs for Human Rights

Mahy Hassan Abdel Latif

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt

Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg

Twitter: [@MfaEgypt](https://twitter.com/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

Early in the afternoon of 14 January, plainclothes officers from Abdeen police station arrived at the central Cairo flat shared by Taher Mokhtar, Hossameldine Hammad and Ahmed Mohamed Hassan. They asked to search the apartment, in what they said was a routine check on flats in the vicinity of Cairo's Tahrir Square, which is near the Interior Ministry headquarters, before the "25 January Revolution" anniversary, when street protests were anticipated. Lawyer Mokhtar Mounir Himidah happened to be in the area and one of the three men contacted him. When he arrived at the apartment, and asked if the officers had a search warrant, they said they did not. They searched the apartment nevertheless, and took three mobile phones, laptops, papers written for Egypt's Doctors' Syndicate and other items. They also took the lawyer's identification cards, photocopied them and returned them.

National Security officers interrogated the three at Abdeen Police station for nine hours without a lawyer present. They drew up a report, which they made available to the lawyer at 3am on 15 January, at the police station. The detainees now stood accused of: being in possession of leaflets that call for changing the constitution and overthrowing the regime; holding meetings in their apartment to incite protests on the 25 January 2016; participating in protests and violence since 25 January 2011 (without making reference to any specific event), and taking advantage of individual acts by police officers to incite people to change the constitution and destroy state facilities. A search warrant was also made available to the defence lawyer, which he believes may have been dated 14 January 2016 retrospectively.

Egypt's Doctors' Syndicate has been active in campaigning for Taher Mokhtar's release. It has written to the Public Prosecutor and Minister of Interior. Taher Mokhtar is highly regarded as an activist and Syndicate member working for detainees' right to healthcare, as well as the rights of workers, minorities and in particular refugees. Egypt's Doctors' Syndicate, officially called the Egyptian Medical Syndicate, is an independent union of doctors working for the rights of Egypt's doctors and advocating for the health of citizens and detainees.

The Egyptian authorities have made other arrests ahead of the 25 January anniversary. Reuters News Agency reported on 14 January, quoting an Interior Ministry official, that the Egyptian security forces had arrested two people for managing multiple Facebook pages they said were used to support the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood and encourage protest on 25 January. Egypt's Al-Bedaiah news website reported on 19 January, citing an unnamed source at the Cairo security directorate, that 5,000 furnished apartments were searched in Cairo ahead of 25 January. Officers reportedly arrested 47 foreigners from Europe and East Asia, whose residence visas had expired, as well as 65 Syrians and Libyans who had entered the country illegally.

Names: Taher Mokhtar, Hossameldine Hammad, Ahmed Mohamed Hassan
Gender m/f: m

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