

EGYPTFive men detained in connection with their actual or perceived sexual orientation

At least five men were detained earlier this month because of their actual or perceived homosexuality, in Buhaira province, southeast of Alexandria. Amnesty International fears that they are at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

On about 15 January the Public Prosecutor in the provincial capital, Damanhour, ordered the men to be detained while investigations were carried out into allegations of "habitual debauchery". This charge is used in Egyptian law to criminalize homosexual acts.

The Public Prosecution reportedly ordered the defendants to be medically examined by forensic experts. Amnesty International fears that the men will be forcibly subjected to anal examinations to determine whether they have engaged in anal sex. Such examinations have previously amounted to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2001 alone, dozens of men, including at least one juvenile, were detained for months solely on the basis of their actual or perceived sexual orientation. Of this group, 22 men and a juvenile, whom Amnesty International has adopted as prisoners of conscience, were eventually sentenced to prison terms. Amnesty International is calling for them to be released immediately and unconditionally.

Men detained for their actual or perceived sexual orientation in Egypt have reported being tortured in police stations, prisons and other detention centres, by members of the security forces and prison staff or other detainees. Detainees are at particular risk of torture and ill-treatment during the initial weeks in custody while they have only limited access to the outside world. The torture they have reported includes being beaten with a stick on the soles of the feet (known as *falaka*).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic or your own language:

- seeking assurances that the five men detained in Buhaira province on allegations of "habitual debauchery" are given regular access to lawyers of their choice;
- urging the authorities to ensure that they are humanely treated in detention and protected from torture and ill-treatment at the hands of police, prison warders or other detainees;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the men are not subjected to forcible anal examinations to determine whether they have engaged in anal sex;
- reminding the government of the absolute prohibition on torture in customary international law and of their commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Mohammad Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
'Abedine Palace, Cairo, Egypt
Telegram: President Mubarak, Cairo, Egypt

E-mail:webmaster@presidency.gov.eg
Fax:+ 202 390 1998
Telex:93794 WAZRA UN
Salutation:Your Excellency

His Excellency General Habib al-Adeli
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Telegram:Minister Interior, Cairo, Egypt
Fax:+ 202 579 2031
E-mail:moi@idsc.gov.eg
Salutation:Dear Minister

His Excellency Mr Faruq Sayf al-Nasr
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Midan Lazoghly, Cairo, Egypt
Telegrams:Minister Sayf al-Nasr, Cairo, Egypt
Faxes:+202 795 8103
E-mail: moheb@idsc.gov.eg
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Public Prosecutor
Counsellor Maher 'Abd al-Wahid
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali
Ramses Street
Cairo
EGYPT
Fax:+ 202 577 47 16

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 March 2002.