

EXTERNAL

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FOUR DOCTORS IN DETENTION

**Drs 'Issam al-'Iryan, Ibrahim al-Za'farani, Mohammad Salama
and Medhat Mohammad 'Abd al-Ghani**

EGYPT

Four Egyptian doctors were arrested in the early hours of 22 January 1995 and are being held under consecutive 15-day detention orders. Two of the doctors are office holders within the Egyptian Medical Syndicate, Egypt's national medical association. They are **Dr 'Issam al-'Iryan**, Deputy Secretary General of the Medical Syndicate in Cairo and former member of the People's Assembly (parliament) and **Dr Ibrahim al-Za'farani**, Secretary General of the Alexandria branch of the Syndicate. The other two are **Dr Mohammad Salama**, a general practitioner in Badrashin, Cairo and **Dr Medhat Mohammad 'Abd al-Ghani**, a general practitioner in al-Zaqaziq, north of Cairo.

Upon arrest they were issued with 15-day detention orders by the State Security Prosecutor and these were renewed in early February. The renewed detention orders were issued on 2 February for Drs al-'Iryan, Salama and 'Abd al-Ghani and on 4 February for Dr al-Za'Farani. All are reportedly members of the Muslim Brothers, an Islamist movement which is officially banned but tolerated in practice. Members and leaders of this movement operate freely and are influential within Egyptian society. The Muslim Brothers are dominant within the Medical Syndicate and several other professional associations. Twenty-three other members of the movement were arrested on the same day.

Those arrested have now reportedly been charged with "membership of a secret organization whose aim is to attempt to overthrow the regime by force, possession of hostile printed materials and contacts with foreign quarters". All are believed to be held in Istiqbal Tora prison, outside Cairo.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, the reason for their arrest may be that they had begun to campaign for parliamentary elections which are to be held in November 1995.

It would appear that the government is intent on clamping down on professional associations where the Muslim Brothers are influential. Dozens of lawyers were arrested in May 1994 and these arrests were followed by those of a number of journalists.

The Muslim Brothers have, as an organization, condemned the violence carried out by radical Islamist groups. Amnesty International regards these doctors as prisoners of conscience and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release from prison.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Middle East Program
Date: 13 February 1995

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Four doctors in detention
Drs 'Issam al-'Iryan, Ibrahim al-Za'farani, Mohammad Salama
and Medhat Mohamad 'Abd al-Ghani**

EGYPT

Keywords

Theme: POCs

Profession/association: Doctors/Egyptian Medical Syndicate

Summary

Four doctors, two of whom are office holders within Egypt's national medical association, were arrested in January in connection with their membership of the Muslim Brothers, an organization officially banned in Egypt, but tolerated in practice. Please see the details attached.

Recommended actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below:

- expressing concern at the arrest of these doctors and at the charges which have been brought against them
- noting that they appear to have been arrested for their membership of the Muslim Brothers, an organization which does not advocate or condone violence, and urging that they be unconditionally and immediately released from custody

Addresses

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Please forward this information to your own national Medical Association.