

PUBLIC

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UA 237/03 **Prisoner of conscience / health concern**

EGYPT **Ashraf Ibrahim (m), engineer**

Prisoner of conscience Ashraf Ibrahim has been on hunger strike since 30 July in protest at his continued detention without charge or trial. He is currently held in solitary confinement in Mahkum Tora Prison, near Cairo, where he has reportedly been denied adequate medical treatment. Amnesty International is seriously concerned for his health and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Ashraf Ibrahim, an active member of the anti-war movement in Egypt, was detained on 19 April when he presented himself before the State Security Investigations (SSI). Two days earlier, the SSI had searched his home and confiscated certain personal belongings, including his computer.

The State Security Prosecution have levelled several accusations against him, including possessing and disseminating material which threatens public security and public opinion and providing international human rights organizations with material harmful to Egypt's reputation. Ashraf Ibrahim has not been officially charged with any offence. During interrogations, he was reportedly questioned in connection with, among other things, participating in demonstrations on 20 and 21 March against the war in Iraq and downloading material from the Internet, including from websites of international human rights organizations and of the Arabic satellite news channel, *al-Jazeera*.

Since his arrest in April, he has appeared before the State Security Prosecution at regular fifteen-day intervals; each time his detention has been renewed. His next appearance before the State Security Prosecution is scheduled for 13 August. He was reportedly offered the chance of release in exchange for naming twenty other activists.

Around 7 August, a prison doctor reportedly told Ashraf Ibrahim that he should be transferred to hospital. However, according to the latest information received, he remains in prison. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful expression of his political beliefs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of people associated with the anti-war movement, including lawyers, journalists, parliamentarians, academics and students, were detained in the first half of 2003. The majority were detained for their participation in unauthorized demonstrations. Some were held for several weeks in administrative detention under emergency legislation. Many alleged that they were tortured or ill-treated, particularly during the initial period of detention when held incommunicado at the SSI.

During the demonstrations, which took place between in Cairo on 20 and 21 March, scores of men, women and children were detained. All except Ashraf Ibrahim have since been released.

Emergency legislation and Law 10 of 1914 (Assembly Law) impose serious restrictions on the rights of freedom of expression and assembly as guaranteed under international human rights law and standards, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party. In February 2003, the Egyptian Parliament approved the extension of the state of emergency for a further three years.

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

- expressing concern for the health of Ashraf Ibrahim, who has been on a hunger strike since 30 July in protest at his ongoing detention without charge or trial;
- urging for Ashraf Ibrahim to have full access to medical care, including being transferred to hospital, if necessary;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience, jailed solely for the legitimate and peaceful expression of his beliefs.

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 - (emails sent to this address may bounce)
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 of Interior, Cairo, Egypt
E-mail: moi@idsc.gov.eg
Fax: + 202 579 2031 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Dear Minister

Counsellor Maher 'Abd al-Wahid
Public Prosecutor
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali
Ramses Street, Cairo, Egypt
Telegrams: Public Prosecutor, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: + 202 577 4716
Salutation: Dear Public Prosecutor

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 20 September 2003.