

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST DETAINED FOR "INSULTING THE PRESIDENT"

Opposition activist Ahmed Douma, 24, has been detained since 30 April on charges which include "insulting the president". He is a possible prisoner of conscience.

Ahmed Douma presented himself at the public prosecutor's office in the city of Tanta, capital of the northern governorate of Gharbiya, on 30 April to respond to charges of "insulting the president" and "spreading rumours disturbing national security and harming public interest". His case was brought to the Tanta Misdemeanours Court on 5 May, which postponed the trial to 13 May, and ordered his preventive detention be renewed until the new trial date. If convicted he faces up to three years in prison according to Articles 102 and 179 of the Penal Code.

The charges are based on the content of a phone call made by Ahmed Douma on 25 February to a programme on Dream TV presented by Wael Ibrashi, during which he called President Morsi a "killer" in reference to the killing of opposition activists during protests. According to Ahmed Douma's lawyer, the charges are based on a complaint brought by a private individual, a member of the President's Freedom and Justice Party from Tanta, who argued that his feelings had been hurt by what he saw as an insult against the president.

Ahmed Douma's lawyer has told Amnesty International that after a few hours of questioning on 30 April, Ahmed Douma was taken by around 10 police officers into an armoured vehicle and transferred to an unknown location. The prosecutors failed to inform him, his wife or his lawyer of the decision to detain him, the exact charges against him or the place of detention to which he would be transferred. On 2 May, the public prosecutor in Tanta told the lawyer that Ahmed Douma was to be put in preventive detention in Damanhour Prison, 160km north-west of the capital, Cairo. The same day, the spokesperson of the public prosecutor's office announced that Ahmed Douma was being held for four days and would be referred to the Tanta Misdemeanours Court for trial.

Amnesty International is concerned that the procedures followed to arrest Ahmed Douma contravened the Criminal Procedure Code, which require prosecutors to immediately inform the person under arrest or their lawyer of the charges against them, the reason for their preventive detention and their place of detention.

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

- Urge the authorities to grant Ahmed Douma immediate access to his family and lawyers;
- Call on them to investigate the way Ahmed Douma was arrested without him, his family or his lawyer being notified of the decision to detain him, the exact charges against him or his place of detention;
- Call on them to drop all charges against Ahmed Douma which relate to the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Call on them to release him immediately and unconditionally if the charges stem only from his TV interview.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 JUNE 2013 TO:

Prosecutor General

Talaat Ibrahim Abdallah
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali
Ramses Street, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +20225757165

<http://www.ppo.gov.eg/contact.html>

(name in 1st box, email address in
2nd box and message in big box)

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Human Rights and International
Humanitarian and Social Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +20225748822
Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

During the public prosecutor's investigation into the case of the TV phone interview, it transpired that an arrest warrant had been issued against Ahmed Douma in relation to a separate case. The warrant was issued by the South Cairo Criminal Court on the basis that Ahmed Douma was wanted for questioning on suspicion of involvement in clashes which had taken place near the headquarters of the Muslim Brotherhood, the movement behind the ruling Freedom and Justice Party, in the south-eastern Cairo suburb of Moqattam in March 2013. Ahmed Douma's lawyer has told Amnesty International that investigations have not yet been conducted into this case.

Name: Ahmed Douma

Gender m/f: m

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