

EXTERNAL

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Health concern / Legal concern

6 June 1997

EGYPT Mostafa Thabit Bayyoumi, lawyer

Reports that long-term administrative detainee Mostafa Thabit Bayyoumi is being denied medical treatment for his deteriorating health are raising serious concern for his well-being.

Mostafa Thabit Bayyoumi's health problems are thought to include blockages in the veins to his heart, problems with his spine and paralysis in his left leg. His family visited him in prison on 12 May 1997. They reported that he had to be carried to the prison's visiting room, and was unable to speak or move.

Lawyer Mostafa Thabit Bayyoumi has been detained without charge or trial since 1994 in spite of a number of release orders issued by the courts. He is currently being held in al-Wadi al-Gadid Prison, south of Cairo.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has received consistent reports that torture and ill-treatment, lack of adequate medical care and facilities, cramped and unhygienic conditions of detention, and inadequate and poor quality food in prisons where political detainees and prisoners are being held, are resulting in, or contributing to, the ill-health of large numbers of prisoners and detainees, the rapid spread of diseases throughout prisons and deaths in custody - at least four individuals have died in Egyptian prisons in 1997. Most prisons are reported to lack even the most basic medical facilities necessary for the treatment of prisoners' health problems. The majority allegedly have no medical personnel on site, and at least two prisons reportedly receive no more than once-weekly visits by doctors, who dispense only the most basic of medicines.

Amnesty International has also received reports that seriously ill prisoners in need of specialized care have not been transferred to hospital.

The lack of adequate medical facilities and care in Egyptian prisons is in direct contravention of international human rights standards including principle 24 of the UN Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment and principle 1 of the UN Principles of Medical Ethics.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Arabic, English, French or your own language:

- expressing deep concern at the serious ill-health of Mostafa Thabit Bayyoumi, and that he is reportedly being denied access to necessary medical treatment;
- urging that he immediately be allowed to receive the medical treatment he requires;
- expressing concern that Mostafa Thabit Bayyoumi continues to be administratively detained in spite of a number of release orders issued by the courts;
- urging that he be immediately and unconditionally released unless he is to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought before a court capable of offering guarantees for a fair trial in accordance with international standards.

APPEALS TO:

General Hassan al-Alfy
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo
Egypt
Telex: 21361 MOICM UN
Fax: +202 355 7792
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Cairo, Egypt
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Ismail Sallam
Minister of Health and Population
Ministry of Health
Maglis al-Sha'ab Street
Cairo
Egypt
Telex: 94107 MOHEG UN
Telegrams: Health Minister, Cairo, Egypt
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Raga' al-'Arabi
Public Prosecutor
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali
Ramses Street
Cairo
Egypt
Telegrams: Public Prosecutor, Cairo, Egypt
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

General Nabil Sayyam
Director of Prisons
Maslahat al-Sugun
Al-Gala'a Street
Cairo, Egypt
Telegrams: Director of Prisons, Cairo, Egypt
Salutation: Dear Director

COPIES TO:

Ms Nayla Gabr
The Human Rights Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt
Faxes: (20 2) 574 9667

Dr Fathi Sorour
Speaker
The People's Assembly
Magles al-Sha'ab Street, Cairo, Egypt

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 24 July 1997.