

AI Index: PRE01/073/2013  
12 February 2013

## **Former Italian intelligence officials sentenced in Abu Omar case**

Milan Appeals Court has ruled that two former top Italian intelligence officials and three agents were involved in the kidnapping of a Egyptian national Abu Omar.

The two top officials were sentenced to 10 and nine years of imprisonment, while the three other agents received six years each. They were all condemned collectively to pay damages worth Euros 1 million to Abu Omar and Euros 500,000 to his wife.

Abu Omar, was residing in Italy when he was grabbed off the street in Milan in February 2003 and subsequently unlawfully transferred by the CIA from Italy to Egypt, where he was held in secret and allegedly tortured. His kidnapping in Italy was the beginning of an enforced disappearance.

"State secrets should never be invoked to shield governments, including their intelligence officials, from accountability for such serious human rights violations," said Julia Hall, Amnesty International's expert on counter-terrorism and human rights.

"If there is a further appeal, the Italian judiciary should make it crystal clear that when a person -- intelligence agent or not -- commits human rights violations, they cannot be covered up by government claims that disclosure would harm national security."

"In Abu Omar's case, his kidnapping and subsequent rendition and enforced disappearance were crimes, not national security secrets, and those responsible should be brought to justice."

On 1 February 2013, Milan Appeals Court convicted three former US Central Intelligence Agency officials for Abu Omar's kidnapping.