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Fears for Egyptian activist after attack on protest march

Amnesty International has urged the Egyptian authorities to ensure that an activist thought to have been arrested on 23 July is immediately freed and that he is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment.

Blogger and human rights activist Amr Gharbeia, a former Amnesty International staff member currently working with the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, was stopped by a group of men after a protest march in Cairo was attacked.

The men reportedly said they would hand him to the military police. His current whereabouts are not known.

"The Egyptian authorities must urgently clarify the whereabouts of Amr Gharbeia and arrange for his immediate release if he is being held for participating in protests against military rule in Egypt," said Amnesty International.

"The authorities have to make sure that he and all protesters in custody are not subjected to torture or ill treatment - something we have documented on numerous occasions since February, including by the military."

Media reports said that at least 143 people were injured in Cairo's Abbasseya district when demonstrators marching to the Ministry of Defence to press for faster reforms were blocked by security forces.

Protesters and local residents clashed and rocks were apparently thrown from both sides.

Alya El Hosseiny, a protester who was with Amr Gharbeia, told Amnesty International that the group of men beat him and tore his long hair, suspecting him to be a member of the "6 April Youth Movement", one of Egypt's pro-democracy protest movements.

In a statement on 22 July, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) accused the "6 April" movement of "seeking to cause strife" between the army and the Egyptian people.