

URGENT ACTION

DETAINEES AT RISK AFTER PRISON RIOTS

The fate of detainees Mohamed Abu Essaoud Ismail and Mohamed al-Fateh Basyouni is unknown after riots broke out in the prisons of Natroon II and Fayoum. The two men were being held in administrative detention without charge or trial, and the courts have repeatedly ordered their release. Their families are worried about their fate and fear they might be tortured or otherwise ill-treated by the authorities. Other detainees may be at similar risk.

Fifty-year-old **Mohamed Abu Essaoud Ismail** phoned his brother, Ahmed, from outside Wadi Natroon Prison II, north west of Cairo, on 30 January as prison guards reportedly abandoned the prison following riots by inmates. According to Ahmed, he drove to collect Mohamed from the prison, but on their way back they were stopped by a State Security Information (SSI) officer together with a group of people armed with sticks. Ahmed requested that his brother be allowed to return home until the prison administration is able to guarantee his safety, and that he was ready to provide a written commitment to return his brother back to the police. However this was refused and Mohamed was taken by the SSI officer. Ahmed was given no information as to what would happen to Mohamed.

Later on 30 January, Mohamed phoned his brother and told him that he had been moved to Bandar Mamouf, Manoufiya governorate, north of Cairo, and was being held with around 50 people in a small cell. In the following days, his family were denied access to him and were also prevented from giving him medication, including for diabetes.

On 29 January, **Mohamed Abdel Fattah Basyouni**, aged 24, phoned his brother from the Fayoum Prison, south of Cairo, and told him that the cells were on fire and that the prison was burning. There has been no news from him since then. His brother went to ask about him at the SSI office in Tanta, northern Egypt, where he was usually brought to renew his administrative detention order, but obtained no answer.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to guarantee the safety of Mohamed Abu Essaoud Ismail and Mohamed Abdel Fattah Basyouni and other detainees who might be at risk, disclose their whereabouts to their families and allow them access to a medical doctor and relatives;
- Urging them to implement the court decision ordering the release of both men from administrative detention;
- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to immediately open a thorough, impartial and independent investigation into the prison riots and hold anyone responsible for abuses to account.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 15 MARCH 2011 TO:

Minister of Interior

Mahmoud Wagdy
Ministry of Interior
25 El Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt.
Fax: +20 22 796 0682
Email: moi@idsc.gov.eg

Salutation: Dear Minister

Prosecutor General

Abd El-Megeed Mahmoud
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali
Ramses Street, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +20 22 577 4716

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Laila Bahaa Eldin
Human Rights and International
Humanitarian and Social Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +20 22 574 9713

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Under a state of emergency enforced continuously for nearly 30 years in Egypt, anyone can be arrested on the mere suspicion that they might be a threat to public order and security, and detained by administrative order without charge or trial, in practice for as long as the authorities want. Although the authorities introduced amendments in May 2010 limiting the application of the emergency law, these were cosmetic and have had little impact in practice. Emergency legislation has entrenched other serious abuses, including secret detention, enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment, and unfair trials. It also provides a convenient cover for attempts to silence government critics and to muzzle political opponents. Even people suspected of ordinary crimes have been caught in the suffocating web of administrative detention. Administrative detention has also been used to bypass the ordinary criminal justice system and to hold suspects without charge or trial for prolonged periods of time.

Mohamed Abu Essaoud Ismail has spent almost two decades in administrative detention under the emergency law without charge or trial despite scores of court decision ordering his release. He was arrested on 26 June 1991 for membership of Gamaa al-Islamiya (Islamic Group), at that time an armed Islamist group. In 1997, after the group renounced violence, thousands of its members were released. Mohamed Abu Essaoud Ismail, however, continued to be held in Wadi Natroon Prison II in harsh conditions despite his support of the group's renunciation of violence. He is said to suffer from serious health problems and to have been denied adequate medical care and family visits.

Mohamed Abdel Fattah Basyouni was held in Fayoum Prison under administrative detention without charge or trial since September 2009. He was arrested when he came from Yemen, where he is a resident, to visit family in Egypt. He continued to be detained ever since despite having received court orders for his release. His relatives believe that he was arrested because his father, Ahmed Basyouni, was wanted in Egypt and had previously been tried in absentia by a military court for security-related crimes in the case known as the "Returnees from Albania" in 1999.

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