

*Start date: 02/08/04*

**Egypt: Time is running out for torture treatment centre**

The Cairo-based Nadim Centre for the Psychological Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence has recently been subject to harassment and intimidation by the Egyptian authorities. They face the threat of closure on 18 August.

The centre provides vital psychological treatment and rehabilitation for torture victims, including those tortured by the police and security forces and women suffering domestic violence. It also treats refugees, predominantly Sudanese nationals, tortured in their country of origin. Their work with refugees is particularly valuable at a time when Sudan struggles with a human rights crisis.

The Ministry of Health has accused the centre of breaching the law, in particular carrying out unauthorized activities as a medical establishment. These activities are yet to be specified but appear to relate to the legitimate human rights work of the centre's staff.

This threat is part of a trend in recent years during which the Egyptian government has clamped down on non-governmental organizations, forcing them to operate under the shadow of a restrictive law that regulates their activities and even criminalizes acts amounting to no more than the exercise of freedom of association. The work of organizations, such as the Nadim Centre, is crucial in a context in which torture and ill-treatment are systematically practised in places of detention.

Time is running out. Amnesty International calls on all its supporters to speak up in defence of this invaluable centre.

Please send appeals immediately to Egypt's Minister of Health.

Your Excellency

I am deeply concerned at the harassment and intimidation faced by the Nadim Centre for the Psychological Treatment and Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence and the possible threat of its closure.

I urge you to ensure that the centre is allowed to continue to carry out its vital work for victims of torture who have suffered abuse in Egypt and elsewhere.

Your government must take immediate and decisive steps to end torture in Egypt. This includes ensuring that those engaged in fighting against torture can pursue their activities unhindered.

Sincerely

Dr. Muhammad 'Awad Tag al-Din  
Minister of Health  
Ministry of Health  
Shari' Maglis al-Sha'b  
Cairo

Egypt

Fax: + 202 796 2751 / 795 3966 / 795 9422

Email: [moh@idsc.gov.eg](mailto:moh@idsc.gov.eg)