

URGENT ACTION

UNJUSTLY HELD STUDENT DENIED PROSTHETIC LEG

Oqba Hashad has been arbitrarily detained without trial for over four years and six months solely for his brother's human rights activism. Security forces subjected him to enforced disappearance for 77 days, during which they tortured and otherwise ill-treated him including through severe beatings, electric shocks and suspension in contorted positions. Authorities in Wadi al-Natroun prison, where he is held, continue to deny him access to adequate health care, including for his right leg, amputated above the knee from his childhood, and for which he needs a prosthetic leg to move. Since his prosthetic leg broke in August 2022, prison authorities have denied him a replacement as well as the medicine and antiseptics he needs for his stump care.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Public Prosecutor Mohamed Shawky Ayyad

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Dear Counsellor,

Oqba Hashad, a 26-year-old university student, has been arbitrarily detained for four years and six months without trial, solely due to his family affiliation, in particular the human rights activism of his brother Amr Hashad, who left Egypt in 2019. Prison authorities had interrogated Oqba Hashad on multiple occasions, most recently in October 2023, about his brother's human rights work and contact with his family in Egypt. They also questioned Oqba Hashad on whether he had shared any information with his brother about his prison conditions. Following his arbitrary arrest on 20 May 2019 from his university accommodation in Sadat City, Menoufia governorate, without an arrest warrant, security forces forcibly disappeared Oqba Hashad for 77 days, during which period he was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. According to information gathered by Amnesty International, Oqba Hashad was stripped of his clothes, suspended by his arms from the ceiling, beaten, dragged on the ground by a rope tied around his neck, insulted, and given electric shocks including on his genitals and stump of his leg, amputated above the knee since he was six years old. On 1 August 2019, he was taken before a Shebin Al-Koum prosecutor, who ordered his pre-trial detention pending investigations into charges with "joining a group formed against the rule of law" and "participating in demonstrations to overthrow the regime". Since then, his pre-trial detention, which has long exceeded the two-year limit permitted under Egyptian law, has been extended without granting him the opportunity to meaningfully challenge the lawfulness of his detention.

Since August 2022, prison authorities have been subjecting Oqba Hashad to torture and other ill-treatment through cruelly denying him access to adequate healthcare and a prosthetic leg he needs to be able to move unassisted, causing him severe physical and psychological pain and suffering, including as he has to rely on other prisoners to meet his most basic needs. After his prosthetic leg broke in August 2022, prison authorities have not only failed to provide him a replacement, but also refused to deliver the prosthetic leg his family repaired at their own expense under the pretext of security checks. They are also denying him access to antiseptics and sterilization tools needed to care for his stump, increasing the risk of infection. Prison authorities also refuse to grant him specialized medical care, not available in prison, raising fears about permanent and irreversible damage to his spinal column, according to independent doctors consulted by his relatives. He also suffers from severe back pain as he is forced to sleep on the floor.

I urge you to ensure that Oqba Hashad is immediately and unconditionally released and all charges against him dropped as he is detained solely as a punishment for his brother's activism. Pending his release, he must be granted regular access to his family, lawyers and adequate healthcare, including in outside hospitals if necessary, and held in conditions that comply with international standards for the treatment of prisoners.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Oqba Hashad was studying business at the University of Sadat City (USC), in Menoufia governorate, prior to his

arrest. On 20 May 2019, National Security Agency (NSA) agents stormed his student residence and arrested everyone without a warrant. All other students were released within days, except for Oqba Hashad. His brother Amr Hashad, a human rights activist and legal researcher, fled Egypt in 2019 after his release from prison. He was arrested in 2014 in connection to his activism with the student union at Assiut University and opposition to the university's decision to engage a private security firm. Subsequently, a court sentenced Amr Hashad to three years in prison after convicting him of charges of joining a terrorist organization, attempting to overthrow the government and inciting protests. From exile, Amr Hashad continued to document human rights violations in Egypt including enforced disappearances and cruel and inhuman detention conditions in Egyptian prisons. Oqba Hashad's mother was also detained and questioned for nine hours during a visit to Shebin Al-Kom prison, where Oqba Hashad was held at the time, in a relation to a Facebook post written by Amr Hashad in December 2020 about his brother being banned from accessing his prosthetic leg and the injustices suffered by their family.

Oqba Hashad is currently detained in the Wadi El Natroun prison. On 7 August 2022, relatives of Oqba Hashad's cellmate, who had visited the prison that day, called Oqba Hashad's family to inform them that his prosthetic leg broke. His family rushed to the prison to collect the broken prosthetic leg, and took it for repairs at a specialised clinic, where a doctor and an engineer told them that a replacement was needed. The family did not have the financial means to replace it, and therefore sought to repair it instead. On 9 August 2022, when his relatives returned to the prison with the prosthetic leg, the prison authorities insisted on carrying out a thorough inspection, attempted to dismantle it, and informed the family that they will submit it for further inspections. To date, the authorities have not returned the repaired prosthetic leg to him or secured a replacement.

Amnesty International has documented the targeting of relatives of Egyptian dissidents or critics abroad, including through arbitrarily arrests and detention, summoning for questioning and other forms of harassment. For instance, they have forcibly disappeared [and](#) denied healthcare to Salah Soltan, father of prominent US based human rights defender Mohamed Soltan, in retaliation for his son's activism. In August 2023, the authorities arrested the fathers of Egyptian journalist Ahmed Gamal Ziada, based in Belgium, and German-Egyptian activist Fagr al-Adly, based in Germany. Both have been questioned about their relatives' activism.

As a state party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Egypt must fulfil its obligations to ensure that when persons with disabilities are deprived of their liberty, they are, on an equal basis with others, entitled to guarantees in accordance with international human rights law and are provided with reasonable accommodation and with health services specifically because of their disabilities.

On 3 September 2021, United Nations experts, including the Special Rapporteur's on the situation of human rights defenders, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism and the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment sent a [letter](#) to the Egyptian authorities highlighting the enforced disappearance and prolonged arbitrary detention of Oqba Hashad.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic and English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 27 January 2024

Please check with the Amnesty International office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Oqba Hashad (He/Him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: [If previous UA exist, enter the link here]