

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 12/14/95

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Date: 8 August 1995

***FURTHER INFORMATION ON DOCTORS ARRESTED IN EGYPT***

(See MDE 12/05/95 - 13 February 1995)

**Drs 'Issam al-'Eryan, Ibrahim al-Za'farani, Mohammad Salama  
and Mədhat Mohammad 'Abd al-Ghani**

**EGYPT**

Earlier this year, Amnesty International issued information on the arrest of four Egyptian doctors on 22 January 1995. Upon arrest, they were issued with 15-day detention orders by the State Security Prosecutor. Under Egyptian law, the Procuracy can order detention for investigation for up to six months and the detention orders against the doctors were repeatedly renewed. On 22 July 1995, exactly six months after they were taken into custody, two of the doctors were released; the other two, however, have had their detention orders renewed by court ruling. The two who remain in detention are office holders within the Egyptian Medical Syndicate, Egypt's national medical association.

**Background**

At the time of their arrest, Dr 'Issam al-'Eryan was Deputy Secretary General of the Medical Syndicate in Cairo and he had been a member of the People's Assembly (parliament) during the 1980s; Dr Ibrahim al-Za'farani was Secretary General of the Alexandria branch of the Syndicate. The two others, Dr Salama and Dr 'Abd al-Ghani, are both general practitioners. All four doctors are members of the Muslim Brothers, an Islamist movement which is officially banned but tolerated in practice. The Muslim Brothers are dominant within the Medical Syndicate as they are within several other professional associations. Members and leaders of the movement are influential within society and have in the past operated freely.

The doctors were among a group of 25 people, all members of the Muslim Brothers, who were arrested at the end of January 1995. It appears that the government is intent on clamping down on professional associations in which the Muslim Brothers are influential; others arrested at the same time included lecturers, teachers and engineers.

The prosecutor's power to detain can extend for up to six months after which time any further extension is permissible only by court order. On 19 July, when the six month period had elapsed, the North Cairo Court was to take a decision on whether the doctors were to be released or their period of detention extended. Court hearings ran from 11 a.m. until 5 p.m., but the court postponed making a

decision until Saturday 22 July. When defence lawyers arrived at the court on 22nd, they found that the case had been referred to the South Cairo Court. The lawyers had not been informed of this in advance. The South Cairo Court took the decision to release Drs Salama and Abd al-Ghani, but to extend the detention of Drs al-Eryan and al-Zafarani for a further 45 days while investigations continued.

The doctors (and other Muslim Brothers arrested at the same time) had been charged with "membership of a secret organization which aims to overthrow the regime by force, contacts with foreign quarters and possession of hostile printed material". The Muslim Brothers is not an organization which condones violence; indeed, it has publicly denounced it, and Amnesty International considers those still detained to be prisoners of conscience. The true reason for their arrest and continuing detention is believed to be that they had begun campaigning for legislative elections which are due to be held in November 1995. Many prominent members of the Muslim Brothers are reported to have stated that they would stand as independent candidates. The doctors and others arrested in January are reported to have held a private meeting to discuss election strategy which was apparently videoed by the Egyptian Secret Service.

Amnesty International is calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Drs'Issam al'Eryan and Ibrahim Khalil al-Za'farani.



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To: Medical professionals  
From: Medical Office / Middle East Regional Program  
Date: 8 August 1995

### *FURTHER INFORMATION ON MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION*

(See MDC 12/05/95 - 13 February 1995)

**Drs 'Issam al-'Eryan, Ibrahim al-Za'farani, Mohammad Salama  
and Mcdhat Mohammad 'Abd al-Ghani  
EGYPT**

#### **Keywords**

Theme: POCs

Profession/association: Doctors/Egyptian Medical Syndicate

#### **Summary**

Two of four Egyptian doctors arrested in January 1995 were released from custody on 22 July 1995, but the remaining two have had their period of detention extended by a Cairo court for a further 45 days. Both are office bearers within the Egyptian Medical Syndicate. Please see the details attached.

#### **Recommended Actions**

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below:

- welcoming the release on 22 July of Drs Mohammad Salama and Mcdhat Mohammad 'Abd al-Ghani
- expressing deep concern, however, at the extension by the South Cairo Court of the detention of Drs 'Issam al-'Eryan and Ibrahim al-Za'farani
- noting that both are office bearers within the Egyptian Medical Syndicate who appear to have been arrested for their membership of the Muslim Brothers, an organization which does not advocate or condone violence. Urging their immediate and unconditional release from custody

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**Copies to:**

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and to Egyptian diplomatic representatives in your own country.

Please send this information to your own national medical association asking them to appeal on behalf of Drs 'Issam al-'Eryan and Ibrahim al-Za'farani