

URGENT ACTION

PROTESTORS AT RISK OF TORTURE IN CAIRO

At least 300 people are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment after their arrest by military and other forces. They may face unfair military trials after being arrested during a demonstration against military rule in Egypt, on 4 May.

During the demonstration thousands of people protested against military rule and the killing on 2 May 2012 of protesters around the Defence Ministry, in Cairo's Abbaseya neighbourhood. Hundreds of people were injured when military forces violently dispersed the demonstration. One soldier was reportedly killed in the clashes that followed. Military police are reported to have arrested protesters at random.

Protesters who have already been released from military custody have alleged that they were severely beaten, sexually harassed, and/or verbally abused or humiliated. Aya Kamal, a doctor, has spoken publicly of her experience whilst in military custody. She stated that people from the street were herded into the nearby Al-Noor Mosque and locked inside. The military and riot police then entered the mosque threatening, insulting and beating those inside. One woman was injured by a bullet when a policeman randomly fired his weapon. Aya Kamal also described how she and other women were beaten and sexually harassed while being transported to a military compound and again after arriving at Al-Qanater Prison.

Currently, more than 300 people face both the risks of torture and unfair trial before military courts. They are held in several prisons and detention centres in Cairo. Charges against the detainees include "attacking and injuring members of the army", "joining a group with the intention of disrupting public order", "assembly and association in a public street and disrupting traffic" and "presence in a restricted military area". The military prosecution ordered their detention for 15 days pending investigations..

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to ensure all detainees are protected from torture or other ill-treatment and that they have immediate and unhindered access to their lawyers, family visits and adequate medical care;
- Calling on them to conduct a thorough, independent and impartial investigation into reports of torture and other ill-treatment of those in custody; with the results made public and anyone found responsible for abuses brought to justice;
- Calling for the immediate and unconditional release of anyone detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of assembly;
- Urging the authorities to stop all investigations by the military prosecution in relation to this incident and to refer them to the ordinary civilian judiciary through the office of the public prosecutor.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 JUNE 2012 TO:

Leader Supreme Council of the

Armed Forces

Field Marshal Muhammad Tantawi

Ministry of Defence, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 279 580 48 (May be switched off after office hours GMT+2)

Salutation: **Dear Field Marshal**

Minister of Interior

Mohamed Ibrahim Youssef

Ministry of Interior

Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 279 455 29

Salutation: **Your Excellency**

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

PROTESTORS AT RISK OF TORTURE IN CAIRO

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Protesters gathered on 4 May following Friday prayers in front of the Ministry of Defence in Abbaseya to protest against military rule. The protest was also a response to the death of at least seven protesters on 2 May when groups of armed individuals clashed with protesters near the Defence Ministry in Cairo. The protesters had been staging a sit-in since 27 April near the Defence Ministry and a previous attack on them had left one man dead and over 100 people injured. The protesters had been demonstrating in support of a politician barred from the presidential elections and calling for an end to military rule. There was a marked delay in the army's response to protect the protesters. Although it is still unclear who is responsible for attacking the protesters, some Egyptian activists believe it was orchestrated by the army. Both under former President Mubarak and Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, protesters have often been assaulted by unidentified groups of people.

On 4 May initially peaceful protests turned into an exchange of rocks thrown between protesters and soldiers. Soldiers then used water cannons and tear gas against protesters and finally the military police intervened to violently disperse the remaining protesters from Abbaseya. Hundreds are believed to have been injured, among them medics working in field hospitals. Anas Ahmed, a student and medic in one of the field hospitals, was reportedly beaten by the military police resulting in fractures in his arms and several of his fingers being broken. He was then detained in a military hospital.

Activists have also reported that the military police arrested injured protesters from hospitals and either transferred them immediately to a military compound for prosecution or moved them to other hospitals. Besides the 300 mentioned above, some 200 are now reported to be detained in hospitals. Egyptian NGOs know of at least nine children who were among those detained. However, some of the detainees have been released, among them 15 women, two children, students and some of the injured

Throughout 2011 and in 2012 Amnesty International has been documenting reports from detainees arrested following protests who have described being subjected to methods of torture or other ill-treatment including severe beatings, electrocution, flogging, sexual harassment, the threat of rape and humiliation. No independent and impartial investigations have taken place and nobody has been held to account as military forces and police and riot police forces have continued to act with total impunity since the 2011 uprising.

Military courts have jailed thousands of ordinary Egyptians since the 2011 "25 January Revolution". These courts lack independence and impartiality, and defendants are denied an effective opportunity to appeal against their conviction and sentence to a higher tribunal. In line with international law, Amnesty International opposes the trial of civilians by military courts. Such trials violate the right to a fair and public hearing before a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law, as guaranteed in Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a state party. While there are reports that many individuals serving sentences imposed after military trials were released after being retried, thousands remain in prison, among them several children being held in high security adult prisons.

Name: over 300 people

Gender m/f: Both

UA: 131/12 Index: MDE 12/015/2012 Issue Date: 11 May 2012

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**

