

PUBLIC
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To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office / Middle East program
Date: 20 April 1998

FURTHER INFORMATION ON MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

(See MDE 12/07/97 - 8 April 1997 and MDE 12/09/98 - 10 February 1998)

Release of Dr Ibrahim Khalil al-Za'farani and the remaining imprisonment of 11 other doctors

EGYPT

Theme: POCs

Profession/association: Doctors/ Egyptian Medical Association

Summary

Dr Ibrahim Khalil al-Za'farani, one of twelve doctors sentenced to between three and five years' imprisonment in November 1995 (one in 1996), has been released from detention. He had already been released on conclusion of his three year sentence earlier this year, but had immediately been taken into custody on 22 January 1998. Please see the details attached.

Recommended actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below:

- welcoming the release of Dr Ibrahim Khalil al-Za'farani in March 1998
- seeking information on the reasons why he was re-detained after being released from a three-year prison term
- noting that a further 11 doctors remain in prison following their conviction by a military court in November 1995 (one in 1996) on the same charges as Dr Ibrahim Khalil al-Za'farani; you should list their names
- expressing concern at their continuing imprisonment solely for the non-violent expression of their beliefs and urging their immediate release from prison on the grounds that they are prisoners of conscience

Addresses

H.E. Mohammad Hosni Mubarak
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
'Abdine Palace
Cairo, Egypt
Telex: 93794 WAZRA UN
Fax: +202 390 1998

Mr Ismail Sallam
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
Magles al-Sha'ab Street
Cairo, Egypt
Telex: 94107 MOHEG UN

Ms Nayla Gabr
The Human Rights Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil
Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 574 9533

General Habib al-'Adeli
Minister of the Interior
Ministry of the Interior
Al-Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk
Cairo, Egypt
Telex: 21361 MOICM UN
Fax: +202 579 2031

Mr Faruq Sayf al-Nasr
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Midan Lazoghly
Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 355 5700

Al-Mustashar Ahmad al-Sayyid Ahmad
Assistant Public Prosecutor and Head
of the Human Rights Unit
The Public Prosecutor's Office
(Maktab al-Na'ib al-'Am)
Dar al-Qadaa al-'Ali, Ramses Street
Cairo, Egypt
Telex: 94107 MOHEG UN

Please send **copies** of letters to the nearest diplomatic representative of Egypt and to the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights:

Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (EOHR)
8/10 Mathaf El Manial Street
Manial El Roda
Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +20.2.362.1613
e-mail: eohr@link.com.eg

Further action

Please ask your national medical association to appeal for the remaining imprisoned doctors and ask that they inform the Egyptian Medical Syndicate of any action they take.

Egyptian Medical Syndicate
Dar al-Hikmah
42 Kasr el Eini Street
Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +20.2.356.2751

Egyptian Medical Syndicate
Alexandria Branch
Sapa Pacha
Alexandria, Egypt
Tel: +20.3.588.1406
Fax +20.3.588.1412

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**Release of Dr Ibrahim Khalil al-Za'farani and
continued imprisonment of 11 other doctors**

EGYPT

Dr Ibrahim Khalil al-Za'farani, former Secretary General of the Alexandria branch of the Egyptian Medical Association, was released from detention on 18 March 1998. He had been taken into custody on 22 January 1998 within hours after his release from serving a three-year prison sentence imposed by a military court in 1995.

Dr al-Za'farani was originally arrested in January 1995 along with 28 others for membership of the *Muslim Brothers* organization, a banned but until recently tolerated Islamic opposition group. Arrests of other members of the *Muslim Brothers* took place later that year with at least 1,000 members or supporters of the organization being taken into custody in the run-up to and during parliamentary elections held in November and December 1995. The *Muslim Brothers* are the largest and most influential Islamic political force in Egypt and do not advocate or support violence, having condemned Islamic groups who do so. The majority of those arrested were released following the elections, but others including Dr al-Za'farani and 11 other doctors, were convicted by the Supreme Military Court in Cairo in November 1997 on charges of plotting against the government to establish an Islamic state. It is widely believed that the reason for their arrest and subsequent conviction was that some of them were planning to stand as independent candidates during the elections. All those convicted in the November 1997 military trials which took place after the wave of connected arrests that year have been adopted as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International.

The Egyptian authorities have given no reason for the detention of Dr al-Za'farani after his release from prison in January this year. (Under Egyptian law, the Procuracy may order administrative detention for the purposes of investigation for a period of up to six months.) Prior to his arrest, Dr al-Za'farani was, in addition to being Secretary General of the Alexandria branch of the Medical Association, head of its human rights committee and news of his renewed detention had led to publicity in the Egyptian press.

Amnesty International continues to appeal for the release of other members of the *Muslim Brothers* organization who were convicted in the same trial apparently solely for their membership of the organization. The names of the 11 doctors who remain in prison are given below. Two others had been office bearers within the Egyptian Medical Association at the time of their arrest.

Name/age/speciality arrest	Sentence (HL = hard labour)	Date of
<u>CASE NO. 8/1995 (Sentences passed 23 November 1995)</u>		
'Issam al-'Iryan, 45 Deputy Secretary General of the Egyptian Medical Syndicate	5 years+HL 1995	22 January
Mohammad Ahmad 'Abd al-Ghani Hassanein, 46 1995 Medical doctor at the Zaqaqiy University Hospital.	3 years+HL	22 January
'Ali Hassan Hassan al-Day, 44, Dermatologist 1995	3 years+HL	16 July
Mohammad Fu'ad 'Abd al-Magid Ahmad Yusuf, 67 16 July 1995 Gynaecologist	3 years+HL	
<u>CASE NO. 11/1995 (Sentences also passed 23 November 1995)</u>		
Al-Sayyid Mahmoud 'Izzat Ibrahim 'Eissa, 54 October 1995 Medical doctor & lecturer at Zaqaqiy University Faculty of Medicine	5 years+HL	
'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh 'Abd al-Hady, 46 October 1995 Medical doctor & Deputy Secretary General of the Arab Medical Union	5 years+HL	
Mohammad Sa'd 'Alawiyya al-Sayyid Taha, 43 October 1995 Dermatologist	3 years+HL	
Al-Sayyid Mostafa al-Sayyid Mostafa Samak, 34 1995 Doctor at 'Abd al-Nasser hospital, Cairo	3 years	October
Mohy al-Din Mohammad Mahmoud al-Zayat, 43 October 1995 Medical doctor & member of the board of the Islamic Medical Association clinic	3 years+HL	
Anwar Hassan Hassan Shahhata, 44 October 1995 Treasurer of the Egyptian Medical Syndicate	3 years+HL	
Al-Sayyid Mahmoud 'Izzat Ibrahim 'Eissa, 55 October 1995 Doctor & lecturer at Zagaziq University Faculty of Medicine	5 years+HL	
<u>CASE NO. 5/1996 (Sentence passed 15 August 1996)</u>		
Mostafa Tahar 'Ali al-Ghunaymi, 43 1996 Dermatologist	3 years	2 April

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Note on the Muslim Brothers organization

The *Muslim Brothers*' organization, founded in 1928, is probably the biggest and most influential opposition force in Egypt. Its aim is the establishment of a system of rule in the country based on Islamic values and principles. Although the organization was banned in 1954, it was tolerated from the late 1970s by the Egyptian authorities. The arrests at the beginning of 1995 marked the beginning of the Egyptian government's implementation of a program of repression aimed at the organization, targeting in particular the professional associations. The Engineers Syndicate has been under judicial control since mid-1995 and the Bar Association was placed under judicial control in January 1996.

Although in the past the *Muslim Brothers* organization advocated the use of violence, their position on this has changed and, in addition to affirming that the organization neither engages in nor supports acts of violence, it has consistently condemned the violent activities of armed Islamist groups, such as the attempt on President Mubarak's life in Addis Ababa in June 1995, the bombing of the Egyptian embassy in Pakistan in November that year and the deliberate killing of 10 Christian Copts by alleged Islamist activists in a church in Upper Egypt in February 1997. Amnesty International considers that those who have been convicted solely on the grounds of membership or support of the *Muslim Brothers* and who have not used or advocated violence are prisoners of conscience.

The *Muslim Brothers* have repeatedly stated that they believe that the only way to bring about changes beneficial to the country and its people is through legal means, and through dialogue with the government. They also insist that progress can only be made through the modification and reform of the country's political system to allow organizations such as the *Muslim Brothers* the freedom to form political parties and publish their literature.

Although members of the *Muslim Brothers* cannot stand for election in the name of the movement itself, some of the members have stood in previous elections as representatives of officially recognized political parties. Dr 'Issam al-'Iryan, for example, was a member of the People's Assembly (Parliament) during the 1980s.

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