

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 12/033/2007
24 September 2007

Further Information on UA 244/07 (MDE 12/030/2007, 14 September 2007) – Legal concern

EGYPT **Victims of torture**

The Cairo city government shut down the Association of Human Rights and Legal Aid (AHRLA) on 16 September, while Egyptian human rights organizations and civil society activists staged a sit-in protest in front of the organization's premises. The security forces cordoned off the area, and the government officials charged with closing down the organization went into the building. They removed the organization's financial records, and ordered it to stop all its activities.

Despite this, the AHRLA has remained in its offices and continues to offer its services. The AHRLA told Amnesty International that it was not intending to stop receiving complaints from victims of torture and other human rights violations and providing them with legal assistance.

The AHRLA has appealed against the government's decision to an administrative court, which is due to rule on the appeal on 21 October 2007. In the meantime the AHRLA is considered to be officially dissolved.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that the Cairo city government has taken action to close down the AHRLA and halt its activities in support of victims of torture and other ill-treatment;
- calling on the authorities to rescind immediately the decision to close down the AHRLA, and lift any restrictions imposed on it, so it can continue to provide much-needed assistance in defence of human rights;
- urging the authorities to respect AHRLA's right to free association, as set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the UN Declaration on human rights defenders

APPEALS TO:

Dr Ali El-Sayed Al-Moselhi
Minister of Social Solidarity
Ministry of Social Solidarity
19 Al Maraghy Street
Al Agouza, Giza
Egypt

Fax: +20 23 5917799

+20 22 7956387

Email: msi@idsc.gov.eg

Salutation: Dear Minister

Governor Dr Abd Elazem Morsy Wazir
Cairo Governorate
7 Gomhoreya Square
Abdeen, Cairo,
Egypt

Fax: +20 22 391 1335

Salutation: Dear Governor

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 5 November 2007.*****