

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 12/66/97

2 December 1997

Further information on UA 183/97 (MDE 12/36/97, 19 June 1997) - and follow-ups (MDE 12/37/97, 24 June, MDE 12/39/97, 3 July, MDE 12/41/97, 17 July, MDE 12/43/97, 19 August, MDE 12/47/97, 3 September, MDE 12/52/97, 30 September, MDE 12/54/97, 9 October 1997 and MDE 12/57/97, 21 October 1997) - Prisoner of Conscience

EGYPT Kamal Khalil Khalil, engineer, age 47

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Prisoner of conscience Kamal Khalil Khalil was released from detention on 11 November 1997.

Kamal Khalil Khalil had been in detention since 30 August in connection with his peaceful activities in opposition to a new agricultural law, Law 96 of 1992. Charges against him reportedly included dissemination of material critical of Law 96 and inciting farmers to oppose the new law by peaceful means, such as organizing demonstrations and strikes. He was one of the founding members of the Committee for the Defence of Farmers, a group established at the beginning of 1997 by opponents of the new law, which came into effect in October. Shortly before his arrest, he had reportedly attended a public meeting concerned with Law 96.

Hundreds of people, mostly farmers, have been arrested and detained since protests against Law 96 began earlier this year. They include possible prisoners of conscience. They were held under short-term detention orders with many now reported to have been released. The current numbers of those still in detention in connection with opposition to Law 96 is not known to Amnesty International, though the organization is not aware of any recent arrests.

Amnesty International continues to call for the release of those who may still be detained solely for exercising their right to campaign peacefully against Law 96 of 1992 and against the arrest of others on the same grounds. No further action by the UA network is requested at this stage though participants may send letters welcoming the release of Kamal Khalil Khalil, while expressing concern that he spent two months as a prisoner of conscience. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.