

AI Index: PRE 01/623/2011  
14 December 2011

## **Egypt urged to release blogger sentenced by military court**

Egypt's military rulers are continuing their patterns of abuse, Amnesty International said today, after a military court confirmed the imprisonment of a prominent blogger upon his military retrial.

Prisoner of conscience Maikel Nabil Sanad had his three year sentence reduced to two years today after a retrial before a military court.

He was imprisoned in April for criticizing the post-Mubarak military authorities on his Facebook page and for "spreading lies and rumours about the armed forces" on his blog.

"Maikel Nabil Sanad should be released immediately and unconditionally," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Amnesty International's Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director. "He is a prisoner of conscience who should never have been prosecuted in the first place."

Maikel has been on hunger strike since August in protest against his imprisonment and his trial before a military court, surviving on liquids. Recently, military officials have reportedly asked him to apologize to Supreme Council of the Armed Forces for his writings but he refused.

Amnesty International opposes the trial of civilians by military courts and considers these trials as unfair as they violate defendant's rights to a trial before an independent and impartial tribunal.

"My son has been sentenced today because he told the truth about what had happened in Tahrir Square [during the 2011 uprising]," Maikel's father Ibrahim Sanad told Amnesty International.

"We Egyptians are facing injustice and inequality by the armed forces which say something and do something totally different."

Maikel Nabil Sanad remains determined to protest his imprisonment, and told his brother Mark shortly after the verdict, "I am not better than those who have died or lost their eyes"

On top of his conviction and two year sentence today, Maikel Nabil Sanad was fined 200 Egyptian Pounds and asked to pay 300 Egyptian Pounds in legal fees for a lawyer appointed for him by the military court, a sum of around US\$83. He had refused legal representation in protest over his trial before a military court.

"The use of military courts against those who peacefully express their opinions to put them behind bars as a punishment shows that little has changed since President Hosni Mubarak resigned" said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui.