

URGENT ACTION

EGYPTIAN BLOGGER IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

The family of prisoner of conscience Maikel Nabil Sanad, who began a hunger strike on 23 August, have told Amnesty International that he is in solitary confinement and his health has greatly deteriorated.

Blogger Maikel Nabil Sanad, 25, has been on hunger strike since 23 August, in protest against his continued imprisonment in al-Marg Prison in Qalyubiya governorate, north of Cairo. At first he refused to eat but continued to drink water and take his medication. His family says that from today he will no longer take water or medication.

His family are allowed to visit him once every 15 days. However, when they tried to see him as scheduled on 30 August, the prison authorities told them that he did not want to see anyone. His family are very concerned that this means that he is ill, or is being ill-treated, including solitary confinement: he has never refused to see them before.

Although the family have not had direct access to Maikel Nabil Sanad since he began his hunger strike, they were told that he had been in solitary confinement since 24 August, which has now been confirmed by prison authorities. The family also told Amnesty International that during the first days of his hunger strike, prison guards would visit Maikel Nabil Sanad and threaten him with fabricated drug charges if he did not stop. They eventually officially recognized that he was on hunger strike but registered it as beginning on 25 August, not 23 August.

Maikel Nabil Sanad's family are extremely concerned about his health and have been told by undisclosed sources that his health has indeed greatly deteriorated. They believe his life is at great risk now that he is not taking medication for his heart and blood pressure condition. They are also concerned that he has not been receiving adequate medical care from the prison doctors

Maikel Nabil Sanad was arrested on 28 March at his home in Cairo, tried in a military court on 10 April and sentenced to three years' imprisonment for publicly insulting the army through comments he made on Facebook, and for allegedly spreading lies and rumours about the armed forces on his blog. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience imprisoned solely for legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

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

- Calling on the authorities to release Maikel Nabil Sanad immediately and unconditionally, as Amnesty International believes he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that Maikel Nabil Sanad receives any medical attention he may require;
- Calling on them to ensure that Maikel Nabil Sanad is not subjected to any form of ill-treatment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 OCTOBER 2011 TO:

Military General Attorney

Major-General Medhat Radwan

Military Judicial Department

Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 2 412 0980 (ask for fax)

Salutation: Dear General Attorney

Director of Military Judiciary

Major-General Ahmed Abd Allah

Military Judicial Department

Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 2 402 4468 / +202 2 411 3452

Salutation: Dear Director

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 254/11. Further information:

www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/048/2011/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Maikel Nabil Sanad's family told Amnesty International that when he was arrested he was not allowed any visits from his family or lawyers. He did not receive adequate medical attention, and his health deteriorated, so that on one occasion he lost consciousness.

Maikel Nabil Sanad has been arrested twice before. He was detained briefly in November 2010 after posting a statement in favour of conscientious objection on his website. In early February 2011 he was arrested on his way to a public protest and was detained for two days. Amnesty International believes he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces has said that 10,000 civilians have been tried by military courts since the armed forces were deployed on 28 January. Others besides Maikel Nabil Sanad have been tried and sentenced in military courts on charges of "insulting the military". Military trials have also been used sweepingly to include those arrested in protests, workers who go on strike, those charged with 'thuggery', breaking the curfew, illegal possession of firearms, destruction of property, theft or assault.

Appeals before military courts are subject to procedures and regulations of appeals by cassation whereby the Supreme Court for Military Appeals examines the law, its interpretation, and procedural issues and not the evidence itself or the factual basis of the charges.

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.

Name: Maikel Nabil Sanad

Gender m/f: male

Further Information on UA: 254/11 Index: MDE 12/048/2011 Egypt

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