

URGENT ACTION

SYRIAN-PALESTINIAN REFUGEES RISK DEPORTATION

Two Syrian-Palestinian refugees are at imminent risk of being deported to either Gaza or Syria. They are also about to be transferred to a guarded room at Cairo International Airport, where they will have no possibility of contact with the outside world.

K. S. and **A. A.**, both 26, left Syria for their own safety in June 2013 because of the armed conflict taking place in the country. They fled to Egypt where they stayed before going to Gaza respectively in June and August 2013. In October 2014 they fled Gaza, in the aftermath of Israeli military operations, because of the poor economic and humanitarian situation and the blockade. After crossing the border at Rafah, K. S. and A. A. were detained and taken to Cairo International Airport by the Egyptian security forces.

Officials in the airport have regularly threatened them with being forcibly returned to Syria or Gaza if they do not find a quick way to leave Egypt by themselves. The Palestinian delegation to Egypt has recently handed the two men's passports to the Egyptian authorities, raising concerns that the men will be forcibly returned imminently.

An officer at the airport told the refugees on 11 December that they were about to be transferred to "Guard Room 1". All their belongings are to be taken from them, leaving them with no way to contact the outside world. They were also told they would be forcibly returned at the first opportunity to either Gaza or Syria.

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

- Urging the Egyptian authorities not to forcibly return K. S. and A. A. to either Gaza or Syria;
- Urging them to uphold their international obligations under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1969 Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, to provide international protection for those fleeing serious human rights violations and the armed conflict in Syria.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 JANUARY 2015 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Hesham Mohamed Zaki Barakat
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Supreme Court House, 1 "26 July" Road
Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 577 4716
+202 2 575 7165
(switched off after office hours, GMT+2)

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

Minister of the Interior

Mohamed Ibrahim
Ministry of the Interior
25 El Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 279 455 29
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Mahy Hassan Abdel Latif
Multilateral Affairs and International
Security Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 574 9713
Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International is aware of three other groups of refugees at imminent risk of being deported to Syria or Gaza:

There are at least 71 Syrian-Palestinian and Syrian refugees detained in Karmouz Police Station and Al Amariya Police Station in Alexandria. They include at least nine women and 14 minors between three and 16 years old. They were part of a larger group of 103 refugees who had fled the armed conflict in Syria separately. Traffickers took them by boat from the port of Mersin in southern Turkey in October, and abandoned them on an island off the coast of Alexandria, where they were rescued by the Egyptian navy. The Turkish authorities agreed to take 32 of the refugees, returning one other to Egypt.

There are five Palestinians (four men and one woman) detained at Ismailia Police Station. They fled the Gaza Strip for both security and humanitarian reasons in September and October. At least one of them is at risk of being killed if he is forcibly returned to Gaza. They were all arrested by the Egyptian authorities in Alexandria at the end of October. The Egyptian National Security Agency has ordered their forcible return to Gaza, despite a release order from the Public Prosecution.

There are three Palestinians from Syria, including a 14-year-old child, held in Al Anfoushy Detention Centre in Al Gomrok, Alexandria. They were arrested on 30 September after they attempted to leave the country irregularly. The National Security Agency ordered in October that they should be deported to Syria. They have told Amnesty International that no one is helping them, neither the Egyptian government nor their family or friends. They have complained of poor detention conditions, saying that they are held in a cell that is infested with insects and mice.

Due to the precarious conditions for Syrian and Palestinian refugees from Syria living in Egypt, many of whom are living in poor conditions, with limited access to basic services, an increasing number have tried to flee the country in a desperate bid to live a better life. Human rights abuses and discrimination targeting Syrians and Palestinian refugees from Syria are on the rise as they have become increasingly subjected to harassment, threats in the media as well as arbitrary arrest, unlawful detention and – in some cases – forcible return. On 14 August, 13 Palestinian refugees from Syria were forcibly returned to Syria.

The right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution is enshrined in the 1948 UN Declaration of Human Rights and protected under the 1951 Convention and the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention. The right to asylum is also ensured in Article 91 of the Egyptian Constitution and forcible return of refugees is prohibited. The conflict in Syria and the widespread human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity being perpetrated there mean that all those fleeing Syria are *prima facie* refugees.

In the light of the serious human rights concerns in Gaza, including a deterioration of the economic and humanitarian situation, continuing incursions by Israeli forces and the difficulties faced by residents, Amnesty International believes that those fleeing the area should be considered at risk of serious human rights violations and afforded protection against forcible return.

Name: K. S. and A. A.

Gender m/f: m

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