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Fears for Google employee in Egypt

Amnesty International today warned that a Google employee reportedly arrested in Cairo during mass protests is facing a serious risk of torture and other ill-treatment by Egyptian security forces.

Father of two Wael Ghuneim was arrested by Egyptian security forces on 28 January 2011 during protests in Cairo, eyewitnesses said. His whereabouts remain unknown.

"The Egyptian authorities must immediately disclose where Wael Ghuneim is and release him or charge him with a recognizable criminal offence," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, Deputy Director of Middle and North Africa at Amnesty International.

"He must be given access to a doctor and a lawyer of his choice and not be subjected to torture or other ill-treatment. His case is just one of many that highlight the continued crackdown by the Egyptian authorities on those exercising their right to protest peacefully."

Wael Ghuneim, who is Google's head of marketing for the Middle East and North Africa, traveled to Egypt from Dubai, where he lives, on about the 23 January for a business trip.

On 25 January, he attended a number of demonstrations in Cairo, including a large protest in Tahrir Square. He was due to meet his brother for another large demonstration on Friday, 28 January but did not meet him.

His relatives became concerned when they discovered his phones had been disconnected.

Eyewitnesses later told Wael Ghuneim's family that they had seen him being arrested during demonstrations near Mustafa Mohamed Street in Cairo.

Amnesty International would consider Wael Ghuneim to be a prisoner of conscience if he was detained merely for exercising his right to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression.

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