

URGENT ACTION

HEAVY JAIL SENTENCES FOR PEACEFUL PROTEST

Leading activist Alaa Abd El Fattah and 24 other men were sentenced on 11 June to 15 years' imprisonment and a fine of 100,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$13,900) for taking part in a peaceful protest. Alaa Abd El Fattah, Wael Mahmoud Mohamed Metwally and Mohamed Abdul Rahman were arrested on arrival at the court. They are prisoners of conscience.

Lawyers told Amnesty International that the court began the trial before its scheduled time, without giving the lawyers or defendants any notice. The South Cairo Criminal Court, convened at the Tora Police Institute, handed down the sentences at 9.10am, contradicting a decision by the court's General Assembly that trials should start at 9.30am. **Alaa Abd El Fattah, Wael Metwally and Mohamed Abdul Rahman** were arrested at 9.30am, when they arrived at the police station to attend the trial.

They were part of a group of 25 men standing trial for staging a peaceful protest outside Egypt's upper house of parliament, the Shura Council, in November 2013. The court convicted them, in their absence, of demonstrating without with prior notification and a range of trumped-up charges, including "assaulting the security forces", "stealing a police radio", "cutting off access to roads" and "interrupting the work of national institutions".

Defence lawyers appealed the verdict and the court is to set a date for the retrial. The three men are being held in Tora Prison.

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

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to order the immediate and unconditional release of Alaa Abd El Fattah, Mohamed Abdul Rahman and Wael Metwally and quash their convictions and sentences, as they are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of assembly;
- Calling on them to quash the convictions and sentences of the 22 other men for participating in a peaceful protest.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 JULY 2014 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

President

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2 391 1441

Salutation: Your Excellency

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. This is the fifth update of UA 322/13. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/015/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The security forces arrested dozens of protesters on 26 November 2013, after using excessive force to break up a peaceful demonstration by the No To Military Trials group in front of the Shura Council in Cairo. The group were protesting against the committee drafting Egypt's new constitution for including provisions that allowed civilians to be tried before military courts.

The security forces beat several of the protesters, their lawyers told Amnesty International. Women protesters also said that plainclothes security forces officers had beaten them, dragged them across the ground and pulled them by their hair. Some of the women also reported being sexually harassed by the security forces. Journalists, lawyers and women protesters were quickly released without charge, but the Prosecution ordered the detention of 24 male protesters. Alaa Abd El Fattah was arrested at his home two days later.

Most of the men were released on bail on 4 December, with Alaa Abd El Fattah and protester Ahmed Abdel Rahman bailed on 23 May 2014.

Alaa Abdel Fattah is a well-known activist and blogger, and has been detained many times for his opposition to the authorities, including in the last years of Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule and under military rule in 2011.

A new protest law signed by President Adly Mansour on 24 November 2013 gives the Interior Ministry wide discretionary powers over protests. It requires protest organizers to submit complete plans for any gatherings of more than 10 people to the Interior Ministry at least three days in advance. The law also gives the Interior Ministry the authority to cancel a demonstration or change its route; in effect meaning that demonstrations can take place only with the Ministry's prior authorization. The law also gives the security forces a legal framework for the use of excessive force against any protesters deemed to have committed a "crime punishable by law". Protesters convicted of breaking the law face up to five years in prison and fines of EGP100,000 (US\$14,500).

Names: Alaa Abd El Fattah; Ahmed Abdel Rahman Mohamed; Ahmed Hossam El Din Mohamed; Jamal Abdullah Zaki; Yahya Mahmoud Abdul Shafi; Mdug Jamal al-Din Hassan; Mahmoud Yahya Abdal Shafi; Peter Jalal Yousef; Mohamed Hossam El Din Mahmoud; Wael Mahmoud Mohammed Metwally; Hossam Ahmed Shawki; Mohammed Hassan Ibrahim; Mustafa Yousri Mustafa; Baz Mohammad Rifai; Ahmed Mohamed Nabil Hassan; Tariq Abdul Rahman; Mohammed Salah al-Din al-Hilali; Mohammed Abdul Rahman; Mahmoud Abdul Hameed; Abdul Rahman Atef Bobo; Hani Mahmoud Jamal; Mohammad Sami Mokhtar; Abdul Rahman; Mahmoud Mohammed Abdulaziz; Muhammad Abdul Hakim.
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 322/13 Index: MDE 12/033/2014 Issue Date: 12 June 2014