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## **Egypt: authorities must ensure new death in custody case is fully investigated**

Egyptian authorities must independently investigate, without delay, allegations that a young man was tortured to death at a police station in Alexandria, and guarantee the safety of another young man still in custody there, Amnesty International said today.

The family of Ahmed Shaaban, a 19 year old man, allege that he died after being tortured and physically abused by police officers at Sidi Gaber police station on 7 November, and that his body was then dumped into a canal near his neighbourhood to give the impression that he committed suicide.

“These disturbing allegations of enforced disappearance and death in custody, and possibly unlawful killing by police, must be immediately and fully investigated by an independent body,” said Malcolm Smart, Amnesty International’s director for the Middle East and North Africa.

Ahmed Shaaban went missing, allegedly in police detention, on 7 November. His corpse was returned to his family on 11 November, covered in bruises to the head and body, which family members attribute to police torture and beating.

Ahmed Shaaban’s family learnt on 7 November that he was arrested at a police check point on his way back from a wedding, and taken to Sidi Gaber police station together with his friend, Ahmed Farrag Labib.

When the family went to look for Ahmed Shaaban at the police station, police told them he was not detained there, admitting only to detaining Ahmed Farrag Labib in relation to the theft of a mobile phone.

The day after his disappearance, Ahmed Shaaban’s family received an anonymous phone call informing them that he was in detention and being tortured at Sidi Gaber police station.

On 11 November, the family went to Muharram Bek police station where they were informed that the body of Ahmed Shaaban had been found and was at the morgue. Police reportedly told the family not to hold a funeral but to bury the body immediately. Members of the security forces are said to have accompanied the family at the burial and afterwards to have been stationed near the family’s home.

Ahmed Shaaban’s friend Ahmed Farrag Labib has been detained since 7 November and is reportedly being denied access to his family and lawyers.

“The Egyptian authorities must ensure that Ahmed Farrag Labib is protected against possible torture or other mistreatment, and not intimidated by those detaining him. His evidence about what was occurred on 7 November is likely to be crucial to uncovering the truth,” said Malcolm Smart

In a separate case, two police officers from Sidi Gaber station are currently being tried in connection with the death of Khaled Said, a young man who is alleged to have been dragged out of an internet café by plainclothes police and beaten to death in public on the sidewalk.