

URGENT ACTION

AL JAZEERA JOURNALIST IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT
Abdallah Elshamy is now known to be in solitary confinement at a maximum-security prison as punishment for going on hunger strike. The journalist has been refusing to eat since 21 January in protest at his continued imprisonment.

Abdallah Elshamy, a journalist with Al Jazeera Arabic, was transferred from his cell in Tora Istiqbal Prison to al-Aqrab Prison (known as "The Scorpion") on 12 May. Al-Aqrab Prison is, like Tora Istiqbal, part of the Tora Prison complex that lies south of Cairo.

The authorities did not tell Abdallah Elshamy's family or lawyer where they were transferring him, and at first officials at Tora Prison denied that they were still holding him. It was over 24 hours before his family discovered him in al-Aqrab Prison.

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

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to drop all charges against Abdallah Elshamy and release him immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to give Abdallah Elshamy access to any medical attention he may require, and refrain from taking any punitive measures against him for his hunger strike;
- Calling on them to order investigations into the reports of torture and other ill-treatment and bring those responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 JUNE 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

Interim President

Adly Mahmoud Mansour
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 second update of UA 101/14. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE12/025/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

After Abdallah Elshamy was moved from his cell in Tora Istiqbal Prison on 12 May, his lawyer filed a complaint with the prison authorities to reveal his whereabouts. They told him that the journalist was not being held in Tora Prison, but refused to provide an official document confirming this. The journalist's family and lawyer submitted a formal complaint to the Public Prosecution the next day, but the prosecutor refused to meet with them.

After continuing their search, Abdallah Elshamy's family discovered that he was being held in al-Aqrab Prison and were able to meet with him on 14 May. Abdallah Elshamy told them that when the security forces came for him on 12 May, other detainees only allowed them to take him after the security forces threatened to use tear gas and the prison's deputy head claimed he was being transferred to a hospital. Instead, the prison authorities transferred him to solitary confinement in al-Aqrab Prison. From his arrival on 12 May until his family's visit two days later, the guards did not check on him in his cell once.

Abdallah Elshamy is an Egyptian national who works for Al Jazeera Arabic. He had been largely reporting on West Africa, until Al Jazeera asked him to travel to Cairo to report on protests against then-president Mohamed Morsi on 30 June 2013. Abdallah Elshamy is not known to have taken part in the protests or in any political violence. Throughout his time in Egypt, he was working as a journalist. The only evidence presented against him has been his camera, passport and foreign currency taken from him by the security forces during his arrest.

Three days after the ousting of Mohamed Morsi, Abdallah Elshamy began to report on a large sit-in staged by the former president's supporters in Rabaa al-Adawiya Square, in the Nasr City district of Cairo. The security forces used excessive and unnecessary lethal force to disperse the demonstration on 14 August 2013, killing hundreds of people. In the ensuing violence, eight members of the security forces also died.

Abdallah Elshamy was arrested at a nearby military checkpoint when he tried to leave the area. The security forces held him for at least two hours, questioning him about his identity, nationality and work. They then transferred him to Sherouk Police Station, where they beat him and several other detainees, and questioned him about why he was at Rabaa al-Adawiya.

Abdallah Elshamy was transferred to Abu Zabaal Military Prison on 18 August. Despite the summer heat, he and a number of prisoners were first held for two hours, without water, in a police truck. The security forces apparently beat Abdallah Elshamy and the prisoners as they got out of the truck and continued to beat them as they walked into the prison. Abdallah Elshamy was questioned and then taken to a cell with several other detainees. He was beaten again and told to clean the cell.

Three days later, he was transferred to Abu Zaabal Prison 2. Once again, he and other detainees were beaten upon arrival. Abdallah Elshamy was finally transferred to Tora Istiqbal Prison on 16 December.

Abdallah Elshamy has been on hunger strike since 21 January, in protest at his continued detention. He is drinking water, but not eating food. His weight is known to have dropped from 108kg to 73kg and the prison authorities only carried out a report on his hunger strike after the first 30 days. Such reports are a normal procedure, carried out to monitor the health of any detainee on hunger strike and assess how far it has deteriorated. Abdallah Elshamy's health condition is worsening because of his hunger strike. His eyesight is said to be deteriorating, he has passed out at least once and his blood pressure is low.

Name: Abdallah Elshamy

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 101/14 Index: MDE 12/027/2014 Issue Date: 16 May 2014