

URGENT ACTION

HUNDREDS OF PROTESTERS ARRESTED IN EGYPT

Egypt decided in early April to transfer two uninhabited islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia. Security forces arbitrarily arrested hundreds of people, who took to streets across the country in protest to the transfer. Dozens were also arrested in the lead up to planned protests from their homes and cafes. Many remain facing criminal charges.

The Front of Defence for Egyptian Protesters (FDEP) told Amnesty International that they knew of at least 238 people who were arrested across Egypt on 25 April. The FDEP is a group of local activists, including human rights lawyers, formed to protect peaceful demonstrators from human rights violations. The "Freedom for the Brave" movement, another local watchdog, logged a list of 168 names late on 25 April as activists continued to identify detainees the following day. The Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression, a local NGO, said it documented 387 cases of stop and arrests during protests on 15 April across the country.

The islands' transfer is a move that a range of civil society groups have condemned as unconstitutional and lacking in transparency. The 25 April is a public holiday in Egypt and marks the anniversary of Israel's withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula in 1982. The 15 April protests were held a few days after the government announced its recognition of Saudi sovereignty over the islands. Over 90 people were arrested between 19 and 24 April, according to Egyptian human rights groups and activists. Many of those arrested in the crackdown have been remanded in custody on multiple charges, including breaching the counter-terrorism law, the Protest Law and other laws regulating public assemblies, as well as "national security" offences under the Penal Code.

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release anyone detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly;
- Urging them to ensure that others who have been arrested are released unless they are promptly charged with recognizable criminal offences that do not criminalise the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly and tried in full conformity with international fair trial standards;
- Calling on them to ensure detainees are protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and have prompt and regular access to their family and lawyers;
- Calling on them to repeal the Protest Law, counter-terrorism law, and other laws that arbitrarily restrict the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, otherwise amend them in line with international standards.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 JUNE 2016 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
New Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

President

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2391 1441
Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg
Twitter: @AlsisiOfficial
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Laila Bahaa El Din
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2574 9713
Email: Contact.Us@mfa.gov.eg
Twitter: @MfaEgypt

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

Detentions that have taken place recently in Egypt include several leading activists linked to human rights and protest movements. They include Ahmed Abdullah, chair of the board of the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, who was arrested at his home on 25 April by what his representatives described as “Special Forces”. He faces multiple charges, including of inciting violence to overthrow the government, joining a “terrorist” group and promoting “terrorism”.

Labour lawyer and spokesperson for the Revolutionary Socialist Movement, Haytham Mohammedin, was also arrested at his home in the early hours of 22 April by National Security officers, who refused to show him an arrest warrant. One of his lawyers told Amnesty International that Haytham Mohammedin was blindfolded during interrogation and presented to the public prosecutor after more than 24 hours from the time of his arrest, contrary to the requirements of Egyptian law. The prosecutor ordered his detention for 15 days on charges of “joining the banned Muslim Brotherhood”, “planning to overthrow the regime” and “calling for protests against the redrawing of the maritime borders of the country”. He is being held in a Central Security Forces camp, called Kilo 10.5, on the Cairo-Alexandria desert road.

Other people caught up in the crackdown include well-known activists Sanaa Seif, who has been summoned for questioning by a prosecutor on 27 April, and lawyer Malek Adly, against whom an arrest warrant has been issued.

Reports of heavy security presence around central Cairo, including road blocks and armed police, were circulating from the early hours of 25 April, indicating that the Egyptian government intended to quell the protests. The President described the planned demonstrations as an attempt to destabilise the State, while the Interior Minister threatened severe consequences for anyone crossing “red lines”.

Egypt’s Protest Law prohibits protesters from staging demonstrations without the consent of the authorities and gives security forces sweeping powers to disperse “unauthorized” demonstrations. In practice, the authorities have facilitated protests by supporters of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, while routinely dispersing demonstrations by his opponents.

Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed concerns over the draconian counter-terrorism law. The vague and overly broad definition of “terrorist act” included in the law allows the authorities to suppress any form of peaceful dissent. The 25 April demonstrations follow mass protests on 15 April, after the handover of the uninhabited islands was announced. The 15 April demonstrations were the largest seen in Egypt for over two years.

Name: n/a

Gender m/f: n/a

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