

URGENT ACTION

ARBITRARILY DETAINED EGYPTIAN ON HUNGER STRIKE

On 25 January, Islam Khalil and four other prisoners began a hunger strike to protest their arbitrary detention. On 8 January, the Cairo Criminal Court had renewed Islam Khalil's detention for a further 45 days. Islam Khalil, a victim of enforced disappearance, has been held in pre-trial detention on trumped-up charges since 10 March 2018. Islam Khalil maintains that he is innocent. It is believed that the charges brought against him are in retaliation for his political activism. According to information received by Amnesty International, Islam Khalil is physically and mentally exhausted and requires urgent medical care.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mr. Nabil Sadek
Public Prosecutor
Office of the Public Prosecutor,
Dar alQadaal-Ali, Down Town
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2577 4716

Dear Counsellor,

On 25 January 2019, Islam Khalil and four other prisoners started a hunger strike in protest of their arbitrary detention. The date coincides with the eighth anniversary of the 25 January revolution that toppled the Hosni Mubarak's government in Egypt in 2011. Islam Khalil went missing on 10 March 2018. It was not until 2 April 2018 that his family was informed of his whereabouts, after someone reported seeing him at the Tora Investigation prison in Cairo governorate during a visit.

Islam Khalil and three other co-defendants faced the same charges. However, while all the other co-defendants were released in September 2018, Islam remained in arbitrary detention over unfounded charges of "membership of an illegal group" and "spreading false news". The charges, of which Islam Khalil maintains his innocence, are believed to have been brought against him in retaliation for his perceived political activism. On 8 January, the Cairo Criminal Court renewed his detention for another 45 days.

According to information received by Amnesty International, Islam Khalil sleeps on the floor in a small cell that he shares with 14 inmates and suffers from back pain, as well as other health issues. He has been denied access to health care and the medication he urgently needs.

I urge you to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Islam Khalil, who is being detained arbitrarily and drop all charges against him, and that, pending his release, Islam Khalil is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that his detention conditions are in line with international standards, including access to water, food, medical treatment and medication. I urge you to ensure that prompt, independent, effective and impartial investigation is conducted into Islam Khalil's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and the circumstances surrounding his enforced disappearance from 10 March to 1 April 2018, and ensure that all those suspected to be responsible are brought to justice in fair trials.

Kind regards,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Islam Khalil has been a victim of enforced disappearance twice. On 10 March 2018 his family lost contact with him for three weeks when he was in Aswan. The family inquired with the Aswan police station to see if he was being held there, but officers at the station denied his presence. On 15 March 2018, the family submitted a complaint to the public prosecutor about the incident but received no response. The family also inquired with the prosecution in Hurghada, south east of Cairo, and the Aswan prosecution, both of which denied he was in their custody. On 2 April 2018, the family finally learned that he was at Tora Investigation prison through a person who saw him during a visit. The family said Islam Khalil was interrogated by the Supreme State Security Prosecution on 1 April 2018 without the presence of a lawyer.

According to Islam Khalil's brother, the prison's administration prevented him from receiving books and food and denied him family visits for a month. At one point, he was moved to a cell infested with bugs and was deprived of water and adequate food. He was then moved to another cell with detainees who forced him to pray and prevented him from smoking and reading certain books.

In a letter he wrote on 15 August 2018, he says: "We are and will remain on the path of love, calling for justice, freedom and peace. To you, free birds that ignite with hope, sing in our names, and be the sun that protect us. Write about us and be our voice that was deliberately and forcibly silenced".

Islam Khalil has been previously subjected to torture and other ill-treatment in detention, according to his own testimony and information received from his family and lawyer. On 24 May 2015, he was abducted from his home in al-Santa in Al Gharbiyah's governorate in Egypt by National Security Agency (NSA) officers. That was the first time he was subjected to an enforced disappearance, during which the authorities refused to acknowledge his deprivation of liberty and concealed his fate and whereabouts for 122 days. According to his testimony, it was during this period that he was tortured by NSA officers, who tried to force him to "confess" to crimes he said he did not commit. He was then released on 31 August 2016, 10 days after the prosecution ordered his release on bail. He was charged with belonging to the banned Muslim Brotherhood group, inciting violence, and attacking security forces.

Arbitrary detention is the practice of detaining people for no legitimate reason or without legal process. The Egyptian authorities launched a new, intensified crackdown on critics in December 2017, ahead of the presidential elections.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 15 March 2019.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Islam Khalil (He/Him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/9703/2019/en/>