

URGENT ACTION

UNJUSTLY JAILED POLITICIAN'S SON'S HEALTH AT RISK

Anas al-Beltagy has been arbitrarily detained for nearly 11 years solely due to his family affiliation. Since his arrest in December 2013, the Egyptian authorities have subjected him to a catalogue of human rights violations including enforced disappearance, torture and other ill-treatment. After Anas al-Beltagy took part in prison hunger strike in June 2024, authorities in the 10th of Ramadan prison placed him in solitary confinement in a so-called “disciplinary cell” for a period of three months, which led to a severe deterioration of his physical and mental health. Additionally, authorities continue to deny him prison visits from his family and lawyers. Anas al-Beltagy must be immediately and unconditionally released.

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

President Abdelfattah al-Sisi

Office of the President

Al Ittihadia Palace

Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg; X: @AlsisiOfficial

Your Excellency,

I write to express my grave concern over the continued arbitrary detention of Anas al-Beltagy who has spent nearly 11 years behind bars solely because he is the son of prominent Muslim Brotherhood leader and former parliamentarian Mohamed al-Beltagy. Despite courts acquitting him of all charges in four separate cases and a judge's decision to provisionally release him in a fifth case, he continues to be held in pre-trial detention pending investigations into a separate sixth case on similar spurious terrorism-related accusations. Anas al-Beltagy's last hearing was held online on 8 October 2024, a judge extended his detention for 45 days without giving him the opportunity to speak. Since his arrest in December 2013, Anas al-Beltagy has been subjected to a catalogue of human rights violations including enforced disappearance and torture and other ill-treatment through beatings, prolonged solitary confinement and deliberate denial of healthcare.

As Anas al-Beltagy, who is held in the 10th of Ramadan prison in cruel and inhumane conditions, has been banned from any prison visits and other communication since 2017, his family and lawyers only have limited information about him, obtained during online detention renewal hearings or from other prisoners' families. His family learned that he has been suffering from severe psychological distress throughout his prolonged detention. In June 2024, he began a hunger strike that lasted for a month. He was protesting against his arbitrary detention, as well as inhumane conditions of detention and demanding family visits, reading material and climate appropriate clothes. Prison authorities responded by placing him in solitary confinement in a so-called “disciplinary cell” for three months, during which period his mental health has gravely deteriorated. After being removed from the “disciplinary cell”, he was placed in solitary confinement in his regular cell in September 2024. He is also suffering from other health problems such mouth ulcers that have made it difficult for him to speak and even drink water. According to information received through families of other prisoners who have visitation, he has not received any medical care.

I urge you to ensure that Anas al-Beltagy is immediately and unconditionally released and all charges against him are dropped, as they are brought solely because of his family links and the exercise of his human rights. Pending his release, I call on you to ensure that he is held in conditions meeting international standards for the treatment of prisoners and granted regular access to his family, lawyers and adequate healthcare.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Security forces first arrested then 20-year-old Anas al-Beltagy on 24 December 2013 during a visit with his mother to the Tora Prison Complex to see his detained father, Mohamed al-Beltagy. According to information gathered by Amnesty International, security forces surrounded and beat them, before transferring them to the Maadi prosecution where they were interrogated over accusations of assaulting prison guards. The prosecution ordered their provisional release on bail after about twenty hours of detention.

On 31 December 2013, Anas al-Beltagy was arrested from a friend's house in Nasr City neighbourhood of Cairo. He was taken to Nasr City 1 Police Station, where police officers refused to acknowledge his detention and forcibly disappeared him for nearly a month, during which he was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. Amnesty International learned from informed sources that security forces held him in a small iron cage, described as "unfit for humans". After his transfer to Abu Zaabal prison in Alexandria in early 2014, the prison administration held him in prolonged solitary confinement and forced him to sleep on the bare concrete floor. He was subsequently transferred to the Tora Prison Complex, south of Cairo, where he continued to be subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including prolonged solitary confinement. He was transferred to the Badr Prison Complex in November 2022.

He has been held in cruel and inhuman prison conditions, violating the absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment. In Badr Prison, where he was detained from November 2022 to June 2023, he was held in solitary confinement in a freezing cell with fluorescent lights switched on 24 hours a day, not permitted any exercise outdoors and denied any contact with other prisoners. Since his transfer to 10th of Ramadan prison on 8 June 2023, he was also placed in solitary confinement. In June 2024, authorities transferred Anas al-Beltagy to a "disciplinary cell" for a period of three months to punish him for protesting his cruel and inhumane conditions of detention. Disciplinary cells in Egyptian prisons are very small rooms with poor ventilation. These cells are often devoid of any personal necessities for the prisoner and lack natural light or adequate heating. Prisoners in these cells endure harsh conditions, including limited food and water and sometimes strict restrictions on sleep or movement. In these cells, prisoners are prevented from interacting with others and are completely isolated from the daily activities of the prison. In September 2024, Anas al-Beltagy was removed from the "disciplinary cell" and returned to solitary confinement. This means that he is in a regular cell again but remains isolated from other prisoners for extended periods of time and is deprived of communication with others or of participation in any social activities. Prison officials continue to ban his family from bringing him any food, climate-appropriate clothes and medicine, despite well-documented patterns of prison authorities failing to provide those in their custody with sufficient food, potable water, basic items for personal hygiene, adequate clothing and bedding. He is also not allowed to exercise or spend time outdoors.

During his pre-trial detention renewal hearings, which have been held remotely via video link since 2022, and in which he sometimes appears with his hands and legs cuffed, he complained about the deterioration of his physical and mental health and psychological condition due to his detention conditions. Such hearings erode fair trial standards and take place under coercive circumstances in the presence of prison guards and detainees are prevented from communicating privately with their lawyers. Further, they expose detainees to risks of reprisals from guards for complaining about torture or other ill-treatment and impede the ability of judges to spot visible bruises or other injuries. Lawyers also frequently complain of technical problems during online hearings, including poor connectivity and their inability to adequately hear defendants. Anas al-Beltagy's lawyers also reported not seeing him on camera during some scheduled detention renewal hearings, but had no confirmation whether he present in the room. His lawyers said that the judge presiding over his detention renewal hearings has dismissed and failed to address his repeated complaints about his ill-treatment, prompting Anas al-Beltagy to request for the hearings on the renewal of his pre-trial detention to be brought in front of a different judge.

Security forces have long targeted the family of Mohamed al-Beltagy, leading several to flee Egypt. Security forces killed Asma al-Beltagy, Anas al-Beltagy's sister, aged 16 at the time of her death, during their violent dispersal of the Rabaa al-Adawiya sit-in on 14 August 2013, which left some 900 dead. No security or military official has been held accountable for the unlawful lethal use of force to date, while authorities rounded up thousands of actual or suspected members and supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic and English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 21 May 2025.

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Anas al-Beltagy (he/him).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/7575/2024/en/>.