

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT FOR 1234 DAYS

On 4 February, the Cairo Administrative Court postponed activist Ahmed Douma's appeal against his prolonged solitary confinement to 16 May. He has been held in poor detention conditions since his arrest on 3 December 2013.

On 4 February, the Cairo Administrative Court decided to postpone the hearing of **Ahmed Douma's** appeal against his prolonged solitary confinement to 16 May. He is currently detained in Tora Prison, south Cairo. According to his family and lawyers, since his arrest the prison administration has continuously kept him in solitary confinement for over three years, denying him meaningful human contact. This is a violation of his rights under international human rights law, which limits solitary confinement to 15 days. His prolonged solitary confinement and poor access to medical care amount to cruel, degrading, and inhumane treatment.

Ahmed Douma is held in harsh detention conditions. According to his family, his cell is next to a sewer that generates unpleasant odours and attracts insects to the cell. Ahmed Douma is not allowed to leave his cell for more than two hours a day. During this period, he can only exercise by himself, when other detainees have left the courtyard and he is allowed to meet his family only when other detainees have left the prison visiting room. He is not allowed to go to the prison place of worship or library.

Ahmed Douma is in poor health. For over a year, he has been suffering from pain in his knees and for the past two months from pain in his back. The family added that, as a result of being detained in solitary confinement, he suffers from insomnia and a chronic headache because of the lack of sleep. Despite the prison doctors recommending for over a year that Ahmed Douma is sent to an outside hospital, the prison administration continues to ignore their request.

Ahmed Douma's family has submitted a range of complaints to the National Human Rights Council, the Human Rights Committee in the Parliament, the Public Prosecutor, and the Ministry of Interior, against his solitary confinement and the refusal to allow his treatment at an outside hospital. They have yet to receive any reply.

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

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to immediately end Ahmed Douma's solitary confinement and ensure he is held in humane conditions;
- Calling on them to ensure Ahmed Douma has immediate access to adequate medical care, including at an outside hospital if required;
- Calling on them to cease the practise of prolonged solitary confinement, which is prohibited by the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules).

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 JUNE 2017 TO:

Minister of Interior

Magdy Abdel Ghaffar
Ministry of Interior
Fifth Settlement, New Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 2794 5529
Email: center@iscmi.gov.eg or
E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg
Twitter: @moiegy
Salutation: Your Excellency

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 Eldin
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche el-Nile, Cairo, Egypt.
Fax: +202 2574 9713
Email: contact.us@mfa.gov.eg
Twitter: @MfaEgypt

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR NASSER AHMED KAMEL ALI, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 26 South Street W1K 1DW, 020 7499 3304/2401,

Fax 020 7491 1542, eg.emb_london@mfa.gov.eg and atembuk@hotmail.com Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmed Douma is an Egyptian political activist who had been detained and prosecuted several times for his activism. Ahmed Douma faced judicial proceedings in 2009, during Hosni Mubarak presidency, in 2012, under the rule of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and in 2013, during Mohamed Morsi's presidency, when a Tanta Court sentenced him to six months in prison for "insulting the President".

His most recent arrest came on 3 December 2013, when security forces arrested Ahmed Douma at his house; he has been detained ever since. The Prosecution had charged him with protesting illegally and assaulting police officers. On 22 December 2013, Abdeen misdemeanours court in Cairo sentenced Ahmed Douma, along with two other political activists, Ahmed Maher and Mohamed Adel, to three years in prison on charges of participating in unauthorized protest. Earlier in 2017, the latter were released on probation. For a period of three years, they are to be detained in their neighbourhood Police station for 12 hours every day. For more information, see Amnesty International's report, *Punitive probation measures latest tactic used to harass activists*, 6 March 2017, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2017/03/egypt-punitive-probation-measures-latest-tactic-used-to-harass-activists/>.

On 9 December 2014, the presiding judge of Cairo Criminal Court sentenced Ahmed Douma to three years in prison and a fine of 10,000 Egyptian pounds (US\$550), on contempt of court charges. On 4 February 2015, the same court sentenced the activist, alongside 229 people, to life imprisonment, amounting to 25 years in prison, and 17 million Egyptian pounds (US\$940,000) fine, after convicting them of taking part in a violent protest in December 2011. Ahmed Douma is currently challenging the two sentences and the Court of Cassation has set the hearing date to 27 April.

With regard to Ahmed Douma's current detention conditions, the Prison administration has kept him in solitary confinement in violation of the Prisons Internal Regulations List. He has been held in solitary confinement for over three years now. He was not formally informed of the reasons for his solitary confinement, nor was he awarded his right to challenge the allegations that warrant solitary confinement. Tora Prison Administration has also failed to provide Ahmed Douma with the required medical supervision as specified in the prison regulations.

Solitary confinement is governed by the Prisons Internal Regulations List, which limits the solitary confinement time length to six months. The list has been amended twice in the last three years. Most recently, on 16 February 2017, the maximum time limit for solitary confinement, initially set at 15 days, was raised to six months. The list identifies 10 prison rule violations that warrant the use of solitary confinement. The prison administration must also inform the detainees of the reasons for their solitary confinement and provide them with an opportunity to challenge the allegations against them. The list also requires that the prison doctor visits the detainees in solitary confinement on a daily basis.

The UN Standard Minimum Rules (the Nelson Mandela Rules) prohibits the use of prolonged solitary confinement, defined as solitary confinement for a time period in excess of 15 consecutive days, insisting that in no circumstances may restrictions or disciplinary sanctions amount to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.