

URGENT ACTION

EGYPTIAN DEFENDER ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Human rights defender and lawyer Tarek Hussein has been arbitrarily detained by the Egyptian security forces for more than a month, despite the prosecutor's decision to release him on bail on 18 June. He was held incommunicado for 12 days during his detention. He is a prisoner of conscience.

Tarek Mohamed Ahmed Hussein, also known as "Tarek Tito", has been arbitrarily detained by the Egyptian authorities since his arrest on 17 June, despite the prosecutor's order, issued the following day, to release him on bail. About 15 members of the Central Security Forces, both in plainclothes and uniform, raided the lawyer and human rights defender's house in Cairo without presenting a warrant. They detained him and seized his laptop and phone. Then, the police took him to Al-Khanka police station in Cairo. However, when his family and lawyers went there to ask about him, the police denied holding him in the police station. The police only allowed them to see Tarek Hussein after hours of questioning by the National Security Agency. From 3 July, the police held him incommunicado by preventing Tarek Hussein's family and lawyers from communicating with him for 12 days, until the police transferred him to El-Amal (Labour) prison in Behira governorate, two hours northeast of Cairo, where he is now.

Despite the Khanka prosecutor's order to release Tarek Hussein on bail of 2000 EGP (111 USD), the police refuses to release him. He is being investigated on charges of "joining an illegal organization" and "calling for a protest". According to a member of his family, during his detention on 17 June, the police kept him blindfolded for almost four hours, then a National Security Agency (NSA) officer questioned and then told him: "I will let the prosecutor order your release, but we will keep detaining you nonetheless." One police officer physically and verbally assaulted him. For 19 hours, the police then kept moving Tarek Hussein between eight police stations and courts without providing him food or allowing him to sleep.

Tarek Hussein's family paid his bail, but the police refused to release him. The police are claiming that he has failed to serve previous sentences he has received in 13 other cases, but it is believed that the police are using unfounded claims that he failed to serve previous sentences in other cases as a pretext for keeping him imprisoned. Tarek Hussein's lawyers and family have provided Amnesty International with document refuting this claim. In one of the cases, police claim he was sentenced for stealing electricity in 1993, the year when he was born.

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

- Urging Egyptian authorities to release Tarek Hussein immediately and unconditionally and drop the investigation against him as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for his work as a human rights defender
- Urging them to order an independent and impartial investigation into his arbitrary detention and ill-treatment;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 AUGUST 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, 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

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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 etembuk@hotmail.com

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Tarek Hussein is a human rights defender and lawyer who work at the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR). He is also a member of the Freedom for the Brave campaign, a civil society organization working to advance the rights of detainees. Tarek Hussein's arrest came amidst of a renewed crackdown on human rights defenders after the Parliament voted to transfer the Red Sea islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia, which triggered wide popular opposition. Tarek Hussein was the lawyer for several who were arrested in that crackdown. Amnesty International believes that Tarek Hussein is detained solely for his activities as a human rights defender and for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile." The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention considers detention arbitrary when it is clearly impossible to invoke any legal basis justifying the deprivation of liberty, when the deprivation of liberty results from the exercise of the rights or freedoms guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [...]."

Egyptian police has previously detained his brother Mahmoud Hussein, then 18 years old, for protesting while wearing a "Nation without Torture" T-shirt, and a scarf with a logo of the "25 January Revolution." They detained Mahmoud Hussein for over two years without trial, until his release on 11 April 2016. During his detention, he reported that National Security officers had tortured him into making a filmed "confession" of a series of spurious criminal offences, including belonging to the banned Muslim Brotherhood movement, possessing explosives and taking part in an unauthorized protest.

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