

URGENT ACTION

EGYPTIAN PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE RELEASED

Human rights defender Tarek Hussein was released on 27 July. After being arbitrarily detained for 40 days, the former prisoner of conscience has now joined his family.

The Egyptian police released **Tarek Mohamed Ahmed Hussein** on 27 July after arbitrarily detaining him since 17 June. That day, police officers arrested him from his home in Cairo. The police kept him in detention despite Al-Khanka Prosecutor's order to release him on bail on 18 June. They claimed that Tarek Hussein has been sentenced in 16 different cases. During his detention, the police held him incommunicado for 12 days and abused him. Tarek Hussein could still potentially be imprisoned as the Prosecutor has not formally closed the investigation.

Tarek Hussein told Amnesty International that he was detained in poor condition. He said that he was forced to endure crowded cells, rotten food, unsanitary conditions, and bad ventilation for days. The police kept moving him between three prisons, three police stations, and nine courts across Egypt.

Tarek Hussein told Amnesty International that: "Defending human rights is not a crime, expressing ourselves peacefully is not a crime. All these are our rights and not a gift from the government. Even if the government perceives defending human rights as a crime, we will keep on doing it. The real crimes are torture, enforced disappearances, and abusing political opponents. If the price for our struggle for human rights is prison, then it is but a small price for a free and strong Egypt."

Tarek Hussein also extended his gratitude to all those who stood beside him. He said: "Thanks to all those who stood in solidarity with me while I was detained. With your solidarity, prisoners of conscience get stronger. Your activism is not less than the activism of human rights defenders."

Thank you to all those who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the first update of UA 176/17. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/6761/2017/en/>

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