

URGENT ACTION

80-YEAR-OLD EGYPTIAN'S DEATH SENTENCE UPHELD

On 24 September 2018, the Court of Cassation upheld the death sentence of Sheikh Abdel Halim Gabreel – an 80-year-old Quran tutor – in one of Egypt's largest mass trials since 2011.

On 24 September 2018, Egypt's Court of Cassation, which issues final rulings that cannot be appealed, upheld the death sentences of 20 Egyptians, including **Sheikh Abdel Halim Gabreel**. They were convicted of killing 13 policemen during the 2013 attack on a police station in the Giza suburb of Kerdasa. The case relates to what is commonly known as "the Kerdasa Massacre".

On 26 September 2013, Sheikh Abdel Halim Gabreel was arrested from a mosque. After six months of investigations without a lawyer, he was put on trial. On 2 February 2015, he was sentenced to death. The sentence was upheld by the Court of Cassation on 24 September 2018.

Sheikh Abdel Halim Gabreel does not have any political affiliation and did not participate in the criminal acts at Kerdasa. During the trial, two prosecution witnesses denied the testimonies written in the affidavits presented by the prosecution and that incriminated Sheikh Abdel Halim Gabreel.

Sheikh Abdel Halim Gabreel's lawyers performed a forensic medical examination, confirming that he suffers from Psoriasis and is unable to walk long distances. His overall physical and psychological health deteriorated in prison, as he cannot have access to adequate health care. He suffers from an inflammation all over his body due to an allergy. The Wadi al-Natrun prison authorities did not allow his family to bring him medication; they only accept giving him some medication and refuse to let his family provide him with all the medication he needs.

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

- Urging the Egyptian President to grant Sheikh Abdel Halim Gabreel a presidential pardon to halt his execution.
- Urging the Egyptian authorities to halt any planned executions, to commute all existing death sentences and immediately establish an official moratorium on executions, with a view to abolishing the death penalty;
- Calling on them to ensure that Sheikh Abdel Halim Gabreel has adequate and regular access to qualified health professionals providing health care, including access to prescribed medication, in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 DECEMBER 2018 TO:

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

Public Prosecutor

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

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign
Affairs for Human Rights
Ahmed Ihab Gamal Eldin
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil, Cairo
Arab Republic of 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 etembuk@hotmail.com

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The “Kerdasa Massacre” case involves 156 defendants, all of whom had been either sentenced to death or to lengthy imprisonment in the first trial. A mass trial of this nature is incompatible with international fair trial standards.

On 14 August 2013, as Egyptian security forces started shooting at protestors in Cairo's Rabaa al-Adawiya Square, killing more than 1000 of them, demonstrators gathered at the Kerdasa police station. Thirteen police officers were killed, the station was destroyed, and several police vehicles were burnt.

In December 2014, the 156 defendants were found guilty of storming the police station. The verdict has been appealed twice. On 2 July 2017, the court sentenced 20 defendants to death, 80 to life-imprisonment (25 years in prison as per Egyptian law), 34 to 15 years in prison and one minor to 10 years in juvenile prison. The court acquitted the 21 other defendants.

On 24 September 2018, the Court of Cassation upheld the death sentences of all the 20 defendants. It also confirmed the life sentences handed out to 80 defendants and 15-year prison terms for 34 others, involved in the same case. As for the minor, his file was transferred to the juvenile court. The Court of Cassation's verdict is final and cannot be appealed.

In parallel, on 8 September 2018, Cairo's Criminal Court issued 75 death sentences in a mass trial related to participation in the Rabaa sit-in on 14 August 2013.

Since the ousting of Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, Egyptian civil and military courts issued more than 1400 death sentences mostly related to incidents of political violence, following grossly unfair trials. Courts heavily relied on confessions extracted under torture. Defendants were ill-treated and held incommunicado, under conditions that amount to enforced disappearance. Arbitrary arrests and detentions followed by grossly unfair trials of government critics, peaceful protesters, journalists and human rights defenders became routine. Mass unfair trials continued before civil and military courts, with dozens sentenced to death.