

URGENT ACTION

JAILED SON OF POLITICIAN DENIED FAMILY VISITS

Anas al-Beltagy, who has been denied any contact with his family for six years, continues to be barred from prison visits, following his transfer from the Badr 1 Prison to the 10th of Ramadan prison in Sharqia governorate on 8 June. He has been arbitrarily detained for over nine years, despite being acquitted by courts in four separate trials. Concerns over his health mounted after he appeared weak during a detention renewal hearing held via videoconference on 17 July. He must be immediately and unconditionally released as his detention is solely due to his family links.

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

Twitter: @AlSisiOfficial

Your Excellency,

Anas al-Beltagy, the 30-year-old son of detained prominent Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohamed al-Beltagy, has been arbitrarily detained for over nine years solely because of his family affiliation. On 8 June, he was transferred from Badr 1 prison to the 10th of Ramadan prison. His family have no information about his detention and health conditions since they have been denied visits and other contact with him for over six years. He has also been denied deliveries of food and other essentials since 2021. In a detention renewal hearing held through videoconference on 17 July, he struggled to utter a few words to the judge, but was heard saying that he was “tired and deprived of all his legal rights”.

Despite courts acquitting Anas al-Beltagy of all charges in four separate cases and a judge’s decision to provisionally release him in a fifth case, on 20 March 2018 the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) ordered his detention pending investigations into a separate sixth case on similar spurious terrorism-related accusations. This well-documented pattern is referred to as “rotation” by Egyptian activists and lawyers and is intended to keep critics and opponents locked up indefinitely. The authorities have been holding detention renewal hearings remotely via a video link since 2022. Lawyers frequently complain of technical problems, including poor connectivity and their inability to hear defendants, which undermine their rights to meaningfully challenge the legality of their detention and the right to adequate defence.

Since his arrest, Anas al-Beltagy has been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, including through prolonged solitary confinement and deliberate denial of healthcare. He has been banned from any visits, phone calls or written correspondence with his family and lawyers since 2017. Anas al-Beltagy, who was a university student when arrested, has been unable to continue his studies in prison despite attempts to enrol in more than seven universities.

In light of the above, 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 was held in Badr Prison 1 from November 2022 to 8 June 2023 when he was transferred to 10th of Ramadan prison. In Badr 1, he was held in cruel and inhuman conditions of detention. For months, 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. In 10th of Ramadan prison, 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.

During his 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. During online hearings, defence lawyers are present in the courtroom with the judges, while the defendant is connected from a room in the prison. 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.

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 to date, while authorities rounded up thousands of actual or suspected members and supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 29 September 2023

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/ his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/6625/2023/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Minister of Interior
Mahmoud Tawfiq
Ministry of the Interior
25 El Sheikh Rihan Street Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 2794 5529
Email: center@iscmi.gov.eg or E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg
Twitter: @moiegy
Salutation: Dear Minister

Please also send copies to the Presidential pardons committee, via the address of the National Council for Human Rights.

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340 D - North Ninety Street - Fifth Settlement, Cairo, Egypt
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Mr Sherif Ahmed Mahmoud Kamel
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