

URGENT ACTION

14-YEAR-OLD BOY TORTURED TO CONFESS

Egypt's National Security Agency subjected 14-year-old Aser Mohamed to enforced disappearance for 34 days. The boy claims that he was tortured and ill-treated to confess to offences he did not commit. He is at risk of an unfair trial based on his "confessions" obtained under torture. If convicted he could face up to 15 years imprisonment.

On 12 January National Security Agency (NSA) officers detained **Aser Mohamed** in an early morning raid on his family home in the 6th October district of Cairo. The agents, who failed to produce an arrest or search warrant, told his family they intended to take Aser Mohamed away for brief questioning. They refused to say where they were taking him, and for the next 34 days the authorities denied they were holding Aser Mohamed each time his family and lawyers inquired about his whereabouts in prisons, police stations and at the Public Prosecutor's office. Aser Mohamed appeared on 15 February before the Supreme State Security Prosecution in New Cairo for questioning without the presence of his lawyer. He was only allowed to call his family and lawyer after he was questioned by the prosecutor.

Aser Mohamed faces a string of charges including belonging to the banned Muslim Brotherhood group and attacking a hotel. The charges against him were based on his "confessions" that he says were obtained under torture by the NSA during the 34 days of unlawful detention. Aser Mohamed told the prosecutor that he had been tortured to confess to these offences including by being given electric shocks and suspended from his limbs for long hours. However, the prosecutor did not open an investigation into the allegations of torture and enforced disappearance. Instead Aser Mohamed says that the prosecutor threatened that he would send him back to the NSA to face further torture if he tried to retract his confessions. The prosecutor then ordered Aser Mohamed's pre-trial detention in contravention of Egyptian laws that prohibits pre-trial detention for children under the age of 15. Aser Mohamed was referred to trial in August. The court held the first hearing on 6 August and then postponed the hearing to 15 August and again to 8 October. If convicted Aser Mohamed could face up to 15 years imprisonment. He is currently held at the Talbeya police station in Giza, in inhumane detention conditions. He is held with 12 detainees in a 4x6 meters cell. He is not allowed out of the cell. His family has not been able to visit him since 2 August.

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

- Calling on the Egyptian authorities to release Aser Mohamed immediately as his detention is unlawful;
- Calling on them to, in the meantime, allow him full access to his lawyer, medical assistance and family;
- Calling on them to end all ill-treatment of Aser Mohamed and to bring all those responsible for torture and other ill-treatment to justice in fair trials.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 OCTOBER 2016 TO:

Public Prosecutor
Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
New Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Salutation: Dear Counsellor

Interior Minister
Magdy Abdel Ghaffar
Ministry of Interior
Fifth Settlement, New Cairo,
Egypt
Fax: +202 2794 5529
Email: center@moi.gov.eg or
E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg
Twitter: @moiegy
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, egtamboff@gmail.com, and eg_emb_london@mfa.gov.eg

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A mixed force of armed police and NSA officers in plain clothes raided Aser Mohamed's family home and arrested him in the early morning of 12 January 2016. They did not show a judicial arrest or search warrant. The officers refused to inform his parents where they were taking him but told them that they would return him after two hours or so. But they did not return him, and for the next 34 days his family did not know where he was and they had no contact with him. Aser Mohamed's family made frantic efforts to locate him. They searched in Cairo's Bulaq al-Dakrou, Omraneya, Talbeya, Haram and Giza Police Stations; they all denied that he was in their custody. The family also reported and sent postal telegrams to the Public Prosecutor, Ministry of Interior and Attorney General, all without obtaining any information or getting any response.

They heard nothing until 15 February, when Aser Mohamed was able to telephone them as he was being transferred to the Giza Central Security Forces (CSF) camp located 10.5km north of Cairo on the Cairo Alexandria highway. In the call, Aser Mohamed told his family that he had already been taken before and questioned by the State Security Prosecutor, which contravenes Egyptian laws as he should have been referred to Child Prosecution. Once his family knew his whereabouts, Aser Mohamed's parents went to the CSF camp to try to see him and find out if he was in good health. The authorities at the camp, however, denied them access to him and said that they could only visit after he had been there for nine days. When they did get to see him, Aser Mohamed told his parents that throughout his enforced disappearance he had been held at the NSA offices in the 6th October district of Cairo alongside adults. Aser Mohamed told his family that during the first three days of his detention he was tortured by being given electric shocks repeatedly on his body and by being suspended for long hours from his limbs in stress positions. This caused him to suffer from displaced shoulders as a result of the suspension. The NSA refused to grant him access to a doctor and he was only treated by a cellmate who happened to be a doctor. He added that NSA officers had tortured him to force him to "confess" to participating in an attack on 7 January 2016 on the Three Pyramids hotel in Giza, Cairo and to implicate others in committing crimes.

The NSA sent Aser Mohamed to the prosecutor on 15 February alongside an official investigation report. The investigation report claimed that he had been arrested only earlier that day, giving 15 February as his arrest date. The report makes no reference to his previous 34 days of incommunicado detention. The prosecutor charged Aser Mohamed of belonging to the banned Muslim Brotherhood Group and participating in the 7 January hotel attack. When he denied the charges, he alleges that the prosecutor responded: "It seems that you want to go back to the electric shocks again", indicating that the prosecutor knew Aser Mohamed had been subjected to electric shocks torture in detention by the NSA to "confess". The prosecutor took no action to investigate or hold those responsible for torture or other ill-treatment to account. The prosecutor formally charged Aser Mohamed and authorized his further detention under a renewable 15 day detention order. The Public Prosecution referred Aser Mohamed's case to the Cairo Criminal Court (terrorism circuit) in April 2016 and his next hearing will take place on 8 October.

Amnesty International has documented numerous cases where the NSA of the Ministry of Interior has used enforced disappearances to deter opposition and to prevent peaceful dissent. At least three to four people disappear each day across the country. The rise of enforced disappearance has coincided with the appointment of the Minister of Interior, Magdy Abd el-Ghaffar, who is a long serving officer under the State Security Investigations service, which is the secret police under former President Hosni Mubarak responsible for abductions, torture and other crimes under international law and serious human rights violations. For further information please refer to Amnesty International's latest report and press release on Egypt which feature Aser Mohamed's case. The report published on 13 July and titled "*Hundreds disappeared and tortured amid wave of brutal repression*" is available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/07/egypt-hundreds-disappeared-and-tortured-amid-wave-of-brutal-repression/>