

PUBLIC

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Incommunicado detention/enforced disappearance/fear of torture/medical concern

EGYPT

Dia' el Din Gad (m), aged 23

Student blogger Dia' el Din Gad, who has been denouncing President Mubarak for Egypt's policy towards the Gaza Strip and the authorities' attitude to the delivery of humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza, was arrested on 6 February by State Security Investigations (SSI) officers. His whereabouts have still not been disclosed by the Egyptian authorities, despite his family's and lawyer's inquiries to the Ministry of the Interior and the office of the Public prosecutor. He is believed to be held incommunicado in an unknown location, putting him at danger of torture.

Just before his arrest, Dia' el Din Gad had returned to his home in Qotour city near Tanta city (north of Cairo) following the Friday prayer. When he left the house to take a phone call, he was immediately arrested by SSI officers. They beat him as he was screaming to his mother for help and took him away.

Dia' el Din Gad's mother described to Amnesty International how he frequently suffers panic attacks which make it difficult for him to breathe. He also has difficulty walking or bending one of his legs, due to injuries suffered in childhood. He takes painkillers and other medication, which he did not have with him when he was arrested.

Dia' el Din Gad wrote on his blog, *Sout Ghadeb* (Angry Voice) views criticizing the Egyptian policy regarding Gaza – including the restrictions on humanitarian aid delivered through Egypt to Gaza – and later regarding the 4 February arrest of Ahmed Doma, a leading member of the civil disobedience youth movement, the Popular Movement to Free Egypt (usually known as *Ghadeboun* – "we are angry"). He also referred to President Hosni Mubarak as "Ehud Mubarak" – in a reference to Israeli Minister of Defence Ehud Barak. According to local activists, a few days before he was arrested, Dia' el Din Gad had taken part in demonstrations organized by the liberal Wafd opposition party in Cairo in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Egyptian security forces have in the recent months arrested those critical of the government's position with regard to Gaza, including hundreds of members of the Muslim Brotherhood staging protests and many bloggers and youth activists for their writings on Egypt's policy on Gaza. Most recently, Egyptian-German blogger Philip Rizk was arrested by SSI officers on 6 February at a Gaza solidarity march, and held for four days. Another blogger, Mohamed Adel, was arrested on 20 November and detained incommunicado for almost a month. He is now facing charges of belonging to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood opposition group and trying to illegally cross the Egyptian border into Gaza.

Ahmed Doma was sentenced by a military court on 10 February 2009 to one year's imprisonment and a fine of 2,000 Egyptian Pounds (US\$365), along with Ahmed Kamal Abdel Aal. Both were convicted of illegally crossing the eastern border of Egypt into Gaza. While Ahmed Doma appears to have entered the Gaza Strip during the Israeli military campaign and returned afterwards, Ahmed Kamal Abdel Aal appears to have been arrested in Rafah, on suspicion of his intention to cross into the Gaza Strip. On 11 February 2009, Magdy Hussein, General Secretary of the suspended Labour party, was sentenced by a military court under the same charge to two years imprisonment and a fine of 5'000 Egyptian pounds (US\$912).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, Arabic or your own language:

- urging the Egyptian authorities to disclose Dia' el Din Gad' whereabouts immediately, and give him access to lawyers of his choice, his family and any medical attention he may require.
- urging the authorities to ensure that he is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to release Dia' el Din Gad immediately and unconditionally, unless he is promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence, as he appears to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and association.

APPEALS TO:

Minster of Interior

Minister Habib Ibrahim El Adly
Ministry of the Interior
25 Al-Sheikh Rihan Street, Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +20 22 796 0682

Email: moi@idsc.gov.eg

Salutation: Dear Minister

Public Prosecutor

Counsellor Abdel Meguid Mahmoud
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali

Ramses Street, Cairo, EGYPT

Fax: +20 22 577 4716

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

COPIES TO:

Director of Human Rights and International Humanitarian and Social Affairs

Wael Abu al-Magd
Human Rights and International Humanitarian and Social Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche al-Nil

Cairo
EGYPT

Fax: +20 22 574 9713

and to diplomatic representatives of Egypt accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 April 2009.