

URGENT ACTION

TWO CANADIANS DETAINED IN EGYPT

Two Canadian nationals have been detained by Egypt's Public Prosecution on charges relating to violent protests in the capital, Cairo, on 16 August.

Doctor Tarek Loubani and Professor John Greyson arrived in Egypt on 15 August with the intention of travelling immediately to Gaza, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Tarek Loubani is building a relationship between the university hospital in Gaza and the hospital that he works for in Canada. John Greyson, a filmmaker, was accompanying him to document the situation in Gaza. On arrival in Egypt the men had to stay in Cairo as the border with Gaza was shut.

On 16 August, the men were in the vicinity of Ramsis Square in central Cairo where heavy clashes between supporters of Egypt's deposed president, Mohamed Morsi, the security forces and local residents had taken place from the early afternoon to evening. They were arrested at 10pm in the evening when they approached the security forces to ask for directions to their hotel. The men are currently detained in Tora Prison, south of Cairo, where they have access to their lawyers and consular representatives.

After their arrest, a Public Prosecutor ordered that the men be held for 15 days, while he investigated the charges that they were involved in "destroying public property", "violence", "carrying weapons" and "inciting violence". The Public Prosecutor then renewed the detention order for a further 15 days on or around 3 August to continue the investigation.

The men are being held with hundreds of Egyptians who were arrested during the clashes on 16 August, as well as other foreign nationals caught up in the violence. Amnesty International is concerned that, as with the hundreds of others arrested that day, the men have been charged with a broad array of offences without apparent consideration of their individual criminal responsibility.

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

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to release Tarek Loubani and John Greyson, unless they have sufficient admissible evidence to try them before a civilian court in line with international fair trial standards and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Asking the Egyptian authorities to continue to give the men access to their lawyers, families and consular representatives.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 25 OCTOBER 2013 TO:

Interim President

Adly Mahmoud Mansour
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: 011 202 2 391 1441
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Defence

General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Ministry of Defense
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: 011 202 2 290 6004
(Fax/Phoneline) 011 202 2 291 6227
Salutation: Dear General

Public Prosecutor

Hesham Mohamed Zaki Barakat
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Supreme Court House, 1 "26 July" Road
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: 011 202 2 577 4716
011 202 2 575 7165
(switched off after office hours, GMT+2)
Salutation: Dear Counselor

Also send copies to:

Ambassador Sameh Shoukry, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
3521 International Ct NW, Washington DC 20008-2023
Fax: 1 202 244 4319 -OR- 202 244 5131 | Email: Embassy@egyptembassy.net

Please check with the AIUSA Urgent Action Office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Thousands of Egyptians took to the streets on 30 June to ask President Mohamed Morsi to call early presidential elections. It was the start of a new wave of protests against his rule. Over the following days, many of the president's supporters also took to the streets to stage counter-protests. Many of the protests saw clashes between the president's supporters and opponents.

On the night of 3 July, Minister of Defense Abdel Fattah al-Sisi announced that the Constitution was suspended and that Mohamed Morsi was no longer president. He said that an interim government would rule the country ahead of new elections. In the weeks after 3 July, political violence led to the deaths of dozens of Mohamed Morsi's supporters and opponents. In the streets, pro-Morsi protesters faced a series of increasingly bloody crackdowns by the security forces. They led to the deaths of 51 people on 8 July near the Republican Guard Club in Cairo's Nasr City and over 80 people on 27 July around Rabaa al-Adawiya. At the height of the violence on 14 August, over 480 people died after the security forces dispersed mass sit-ins in Nasr City.

On 16 August, 97 people died in violence in Cairo after protests around Ramsis Square by supporters of Egypt's ousted president, Mohamed Morsi, deteriorated into violence. Evidence collected by Amnesty International indicates that some pro-Morsi supporters were heavily armed and used live ammunition against police and local residents who had sided with security forces. However, bystanders and non-violent protesters were also killed in the chaos that ensued.

Security forces failed to take control of the situation or respond to violence used against them in a measured and responsible way to minimize loss of life. Amnesty International has documented an incident where the security forces shot tear gas inside the Al-Fath mosque leading to the death of at least one woman as a result of suffocation.

Several pro-Morsi marches seeking to join the main protest at Ramsis Square on 16 August turned into violent confrontations between protesters and local residents, who sought to prevent demonstrators from accessing their neighborhoods. Victims included Morsi supporters, local residents and members of the security forces.

Fierce fighting lasted for hours around the Azbakiya Police Station, where scuffles between Morsi supporters and local residents escalated into heavy gun battles between protesters and security forces, supported by local residents. The building was later riddled with bullet holes. Casualties were documented on both sides, mostly caused by gunshot wounds. The head of the Police Station, Brigadier-General Imad Fawzi, reported that two lower-ranking members of the security forces died. Thirty more were injured in the violence.

Clashes which began shortly after Friday prayers near the al-Fath mosque grew fiercer once a pro-Morsi march arrived onto the 6 October Bridge seeking to join the main protest in Ramsis Square.

During the incidents and after, the security forces conducted widespread random arrests of more than 650 persons, including women and children, all on the same broad array of accusations, without consideration for their individual criminal responsibility.

Name: Tarek Loubani (m) and John Greyson (m)

Issue(s): Arbitrary arrest

UA: 248/13

Issue Date: 13 September 2013

Country: Egypt