

PRESS RELEASE - THE OBSERVATORY

Egypt: Immediately release Alaa Abdel Fattah and Ahmed Abdel Rahman

Paris-Geneva, February 19, 2015. *The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), calls on the Egyptian authorities to immediately release Alaa Abdel Fattah and Ahmed Abdel Rahman, drop all charges against them, and put an end to the continued judicial harassment against them.*

On February 23, 2015, the Cairo Criminal court is expected to announce the verdict against Mr. Alaa Abdel Fattah, civil and political rights activist, blogger and member of the “No to Military Trials for Civilians” movement together with 24 other individuals, including Mr. **Ahmed Abdel Rahman**¹. They are facing a re-trial on charges of “blocking roads”, “assembling illegally”, “protesting without a permit”, “acquiring weapons during a protest”, and “attacking and injuring a public servant” and “stealing his personal wireless device”. They had been sentenced in first instance to 15 years imprisonment, and they are currently detained². The charges relate to a protest held on November 26, 2013 by the « No to Military Trials for Civilians Group » in front of the Shura Council demanding that the constitutional drafting committee removes the provision allowing military trials for civilians.

“The charges against Alaa Abdel Fattah are completely unfounded as they fall under his legitimate right to freedom of assembly. The Egyptian authorities must immediately end the sanction of fundamental rights, and stop misusing the judiciary to settle political scores”, declared Karim Lahidji, FIDH President.

The Observatory recalls that the trial has been marred by severe violations of the right to a fair trial including procedural irregularities, violations of due process, violations of the right to defence, all of which have been brought to the attention of the Court by the defence lawyers. This case is illustrative of a wider repression campaign targeting human rights defenders opposing the current regime in the country since the “Protest Law” was passed in November 2013.

“We reiterate our concern about the continuing judicial harassment against Alaa Abdel Fattah in particular, who has been arbitrarily detained in numerous different cases as a result of his legitimate human rights activities”, added OMCT Secretary General Gerald Staberock.

The Observatory urges diplomatic missions in Egypt and all relevant stakeholders to attend and monitor the hearing, and calls on the Egyptian authorities to immediately drop all charges held against them in compliance with the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments ratified by Egypt.

For more information, please contact:

- **FIDH: Arthur Manet/Audrey Couprie: + 33 (0) 1 43 55 25 18**
- **OMCT: Miguel Martín Zumalacárregui: + 41 (0) 22 809 49 24**

¹ Mr. Ahmed Abdel Rahman is a passer by who was arrested by the police after he intervened to protect female protesters.

² For more information, see Urgent Appeal from the Observatory EGY 002 / 1113 / OBS 095.6 from November 19, 2014. See also the campaign #ForFreedom launched by FIDH in 2014 to accelerate the release of arbitrarily detained human rights defenders throughout the world, including Alaa Abdel Fattah.