

[aa.com.tr](https://www.aa.com.tr)

Confirmed COVID-19 deaths at 8 in Egypt

3-4 minutes

CAIRO

The number of confirmed deaths from the novel coronavirus in Egypt rose to eight, according to officials Friday.

Health Ministry spokesman Khalid Mujahid said a 60-year-old, who was treated at a hospital in Giza city near Cairo, died because of the pandemic.

Mujahid said that the number of cases increased to 285 with the virus detected in 29 additional patients.

The ministry reported March 8 the first death from the coronavirus was a German citizen.

Amnesty International demanded Friday that Egypt release "prisoners of conscience and other prisoners at risk" as the outbreak grows.

"Amid rising fears over the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Egypt's overcrowded prisons, the Egyptian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release all activists and human rights defenders detained solely for peacefully expressing their views," it said. Authorities should

also consider releasing pre-trial detainees and detainees who are "especially vulnerable to the disease" including those with underlying medical conditions and the elderly people "as a means to reduce the prison population and prevent harm."

It urged the authorities to consider adopting non-custodial measures for those accused of "non-violent offenses."

"Egypt's authorities should be prompted by the risk of COVID-19 spreading in prisons to fulfil their international obligations and release the thousands of activists, human rights defenders, journalists and peaceful critics held simply for expressing their opinions or peacefully protesting. These individuals should not even be in prison in the first place," said Philip Luther, the group's research and advocacy director for the Middle East and North Africa.

In a written statement, Luther said Egyptian prisons "suffer from poor health care and hygiene and sanitation conditions" and there are thousands of activists, human rights defenders, journalists and peaceful critics "held simply for expressing their opinions or peacefully protesting."

"The authorities have a duty to ensure that all those in custody are provided with adequate medical care," he said.

The virus known as COVID-19 emerged in Wuhan, China last December, and has spread to at least 164 countries and territories. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a pandemic.

Out of more than 258,000 confirmed cases, the death toll now exceeds 11,000, and more than 87,000 have recovered, according to data compiled by the U.S.-based Johns Hopkins University.

Despite the rising number of cases, most who become infected suffer only mild symptoms and recover.

* Writing and contributions by Jeyhun Aliyev from Ankara

[Anadolu Agency website contains only a portion of the news stories offered to subscribers in the AA News Broadcasting System \(HAS\), and in summarized form. Please contact us for subscription options.](#)