



April 10, 2015

President Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama and Secretary Kerry,

On behalf of Amnesty International, I am writing to urge you to seek the release of U.S. citizen Mohamed Soltan, a man who is wrongfully imprisoned and on hunger strike in Egypt. Mr. Soltan is at risk of receiving life imprisonment tomorrow on trumped up charges and for so-called “crimes” that are not recognized under international standards and human rights law. His health has severely deteriorated following a 14-month “wet” hunger strike. We believe the timing is right to press Egyptian officials to resolve this case and end the ongoing violation of his human rights.

Mohamed Soltan, who is a dual U.S.-Egyptian national, was arrested in August 2013 as part of a sweeping crackdown on supporters of Egypt’s ousted president, Mohamed Morsi. He is standing trial with 50 others on charges that include “funding the Rabaa al-Adawiya sit-in” – a mass protest that was dispersed by security forces – and spreading “false information” to destabilize the security of Egypt. Mr. Soltan is due to be sentenced tomorrow after a grossly unfair trial.

Our specific requests are that the Egyptian officials:

- Release Mohamed Soltan without delay. Under international standards the conduct he is accused of – “funding a sit-in” and “spreading false information” – should not be considered criminal offenses.

- Support any request from Mohamed Soltan should he express interest in being repatriated to the U.S. Under Egyptian law decreed in November 2014, Egypt's President can repatriate foreign prisoners (Law 140 of 2014).
- Grant him access to any medical attention he may require.
- Refrain from taking any punitive measures for his hunger strike.

As you know, Mr. Soltan has been on a hunger strike since late January 2014, and Amnesty International has also raised concerns that Egyptian officials are not providing adequate medical care for him. The latest information we have from his family is that he is in poor health, but he has begun consuming liquids regularly in his cell that are keeping him out of immediate risk.

However, we repeatedly have raised concerns that the conditions of Mr. Soltan's detention at Torah Maximum Security Prison are damaging his health. Our information is that he is being held in a very small cell meant for solitary confinement with poor hygiene and ventilation. We fear this might be punishment for his hunger strike.

When Mohamed Soltan was arrested, he was still recovering from surgery for a gunshot wound to his arm that was sustained during the violence that erupted when security forces dispersed pro-Morsi protesters at Rabaa al-Adawiya Square in Cairo. He had to undergo a medical procedure by a cellmate without anaesthesia or sterilization to remove the supporting metal pins from his arm, after the prison authorities refused to have him transferred to a hospital to receive proper medical care. He also has a blood clotting disorder that requires close medical management and could otherwise be fatal. His family says he has never received any care for this issue in detention. Mohamed Soltan is being kept in complete isolation under the guise of provision of medical care, but he reports being alone for 23-and-a-half hours a day.

The case is important because it is emblematic of how the Egyptian authorities are handling the thousands of cases of people detained following the removal of former President Morsi. It also demonstrates how Egyptian authorities are punishing hunger strikers in prison and failing to provide them with adequate medical care. Each of these

are issues of deep concern to Amnesty International. Of course, these issues have also been raised by the U.S. Department of State in its most recent human rights report on Egypt.

While we have worked quietly on Mohamed Soltan's case in recent months, in consultation with the family we are now raising the public profile of his case. This is because we have not seen any indication that the Egyptian officials are going to resolve his case in a positive manner without increased public pressure. If anything, the indication is that quiet diplomacy currently encourages the Egyptians to feel they have an unrestricted hand in this matter.

In contrast, we have noted that recent positive movement on the release of imprisoned Al Jazeera journalists came only after sustained international campaigning that kept their cases in the public spotlight. We believe that a concerted international effort involving both grassroots public campaigning, as well as high-level diplomatic intervention, offers the best chance of helping Mohamed Soltan. We know of the U.S. administration's long-standing concern on the case, but we urge you to go beyond those concerns to leverage your relationships with President al-Sisi, the Egyptian embassy, and other government officials to push for the release of Mohamed Soltan and the immediate provision of appropriate medical care.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. We hope that the U.S. government will move quickly to seek Mr. Soltan's release from prison in Egypt.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Hawkins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "H".

Steven Hawkins

Executive Director

Amnesty International USA