

From:

Date:

Major-General Adel al-Morsi
Director of Military Judiciary
Military Judicial Department
Kairo, ÄGYPTEN

Dear Major-General,

as a human rights defender, I am extremely concerned about the fate of pacifist and conscientious objector Maikel Nabil Sanad (26) who was arrested by military police in his home in the Ain Shams neighbourhood of Cairo on 28th March 2011. He is a peaceful political activist and blogger who participated actively in the Egyptian revolution, and especially highlighted the fact that Egypt has been ruled by the military for six decades. He had initially been sentenced to three years imprisonment before a military court, for "insulting the military institution and publishing false news about it" and "disturbing the public security". His sentence has now being reduced to two years. He has been on hunger strike from August until 31st December.

This is a new beginning for Egypt and your chance to amend all laws that place undue limitations on the rights to freedom of expression. I am sad to hear from the worldwide impartial and non-governmental organisation Amnesty International (AI) that Egypt's military rulers are continuing Mubaraks patterns of abuse.

In publishing on his blog, Maikel made use of his right to freedom of opinion and expression, as enshrined in Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a party.

"Maikel Nabil Sanad should be released immediately and unconditionally," said Hassiba Hadj Sahraoui, the Middle East and North Africa Deputy Director of AI. "He is a prisoner of conscience who should never have been prosecuted in the first place." AI opposes the trial of civilians by military courts and considers these trials as unfair as they violate defendant's rights to a trial before an independent and impartial tribunal.

Dear Major-General, Maikel Nabil Sanad must be released from prison or any other detention he may be subjected to such as in a psychiatric hospital. All he has done is peacefully express his opinion. I call on you to stop criminalising peaceful civilians who exercise their freedom of expression. They should not be tried in military courts.

Yours faithfully