

September 22, 2015

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon  
The Honorable President Barack Obama  
United Nations Headquarters  
New York, NY 10017

Dear President Obama and Mr. Secretary-General:

It is with great concern the undersigned write to draw your attention to continued grave human rights violations occurring in Egypt and specifically the case of Ahmed Maher, Founder of April 6 Movement, a name you both are familiar with, as you have personally called for his release. We ask that you raise his case, and other comparable cases, with President el-Sisi when you meet with him at the United Nations.

Ahmed Maher is the co-founder of the April 6 Movement and Nobel Peace Prize nominee who pioneered the protest movement that eventually led to Egypt's rebellion against the Mubarak dictatorship. Opposed to military and Islamic rule, he stands for democracy and human rights, goals he and the April 6 Movement believe can be achieved by non-violent means. While lauded as a beacon of hope by world leaders after the ousting of Mubarak, Ahmed considers one of his proudest moments to be taking the stage at the U.N. Human Rights Day in 2012 and being introduced by you, Mr. Secretary General. Celebrated by leaders around the world for what his movement achieved, he has now been in prison for 22 months, in solitary confinement for violating Egypt's anti-protest law (Law 107 of 2013).

The case of Maher and his co-defendants - Ahmed Douma and Mohamed Adel – in which they received a three years prison sentence in December 2013 is indicative of the politicization of the judiciary and a wider campaign to crack down on peaceful political opposition to the regime. The injustice committed upon them has not gone unnoticed. President Obama, you have called for Ahmed's release. So has the US State Department, The United Nations, Amnesty International, Human Rights First and the European Union amongst many, and along with many leading Egyptian human rights organizations.

For many of us, Ahmed is not just a symbol of the January 25, 2011 uprising and its aspirations; he is also our friend. We have continued to let him know he is neither forgotten nor alone during his imprisonment of the last 22 months. We know the long lasting effect that friendship can have.

We hope you will join us in sending a strong signal of friendship to someone you have previously recognized as a sterling example of commitment to nonviolence, human rights and democracy.

The Egyptian justice system (including the military justice system) has proven over the last year that it makes short shrift of due process and flouts the rule of law while disregarding the rights of the accused, in this case Ahmed Maher. Egypt is not only in violation of international human rights standards but of specific provisions of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

By ICCPR standards Egypt has violated the following with respect to Maher alone: ICCPR Articles 7,9,10,14,19,21 and Article 16 of the UN Convention against Torture. He has been subjected to torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, his right to a fair trial violated along with his security and freedom. His crime? He exercised his right to peaceful assembly guaranteed by Article 21 of the ICCPR. Maher's treatment also violates the provisions of the 2014 Egyptian Constitution and the Egyptian Code of Criminal Procedure.

While this letter focuses mainly on one person, we are also concerned for many others. Currently there are over 41,000 people arrested since June 30, 2013, according to Egyptian human rights groups. Hundreds have been forcibly disappeared (including minors). Many of these civilians are now appearing for the first time on trial in Military Courts. More than 17 journalists are imprisoned in Egypt in connection with their work, ranking Egypt as the world's fourth biggest prison for media personnel (after China, Eritrea and Iran), according to Reporters Without Borders. Hundreds of charity NGO's have been closed, human rights organizations and activists are threatened with lawsuits, and meaningful avenues of peaceful dissent are criminalized, most recently with the President's adoption of a new law on counter-terrorism (Law 94 of 2015). Human Rights lawyers and activists who have attempted to speak out against the regime are arrested or banned from traveling, their passports confiscated. The targeting of non-violent activists is part of a pattern and policy that continues today. Amr Ali the General Coordinator of April 6<sup>th</sup> was arrested by State Security this week and detained without a lawyer present for 15 days in Tora Prison.

Repression of human rights and violations of the rule of law will not result in positive outcomes for security. On the contrary, governments that have managed to preserve the integrity of their legal systems are the ones who hold the high moral ground and ultimately prevail against extremism and violence.

Ahmed Maher, Mohamed Adel and others silenced by the anti-protest law are eligible for release. President el-Sisi can issue the necessary pardons. We ask that you stand by your values and take up their cases with the President. In the absence of quashing the case, both Ahmed Maher and Mohamed Adel could be released in early 2016 if the 2/3 rule for good behavior were to be applied. Ahmed Douma (along with 229 other defendants) was sentenced to life in prison for the clashes that occurred at the Cabinet during the 2011 uprising. Maher and Adel's release should be without further restrictions. We implore you to stand by

the values we espouse to hold in taking action on behalf of Ahmed Maher and Mohamed Adel.

Maher, Douma, Adel and many others like them languish in prison when they deserve to be free. We will not allow them to be forgotten, their voices silenced or their dream of the very freedoms that we value to be relegated to the past. We urge you to join us in pressing for their release.

Respectfully,

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