

Egypt: crackdown on activists ahead of 25 April protests

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Egypt's military regime has carried out a series of raids ahead of planned demonstrations on April 25 to transfer control of two islands in the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia. At least 100 people have been detained, including Haitham Mohamedain, a leading labor lawyer and activist with the Revolutionary Socialists. Discontent with the regime led by Gen. Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi—which took power after toppling President Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood in 2013 and has ruled with an iron fist since then—has been growing, and finding expression in renewed protests, including at Cairo's Tahrir Square, the symbol of the Arab Spring uprising that overthrew dictator Hosni Mubarak in 2011.

Here, we publish two brief statements about the most recent crackdown from the UK-based EgyptSolidarityInitiative.org website.

Haitham Mohamedain detained for 15 days as Egypt crackdown gathers pace

Egyptian prosecutors ordered the detention of labour lawyer Haitham Mohamedain for fifteen days, while they investigate serious charges against him. Haitham is one of at least 100 activists seized in a series of security raids aimed at stopping the growing momentum behind protests over the handing over of Red Sea islands Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia by the Egyptian government. A coalition of opposition groups and student movements is calling for protests on 25 April.

According to prisoners' rights group Freedom for the Brave, Haitham is currently under investigation for alleged membership of the Muslim Brotherhood, for attempting to overthrow the regime and for calling for illegal demonstrations.

Haitham is one of Egypt's best known labour lawyers, and an activist with the Revolutionary Socialists. He has worked tirelessly to defend striking workers from attack by the police and army. He was arrested previously in September 2013 while en route to represent steel workers in Suez who had been arrested after the police attacked their sit-in, sparking an international solidarity campaign supported by the leaders of most of the UK trade union movement.

25 April 2015

Dozens of activists arrested in Egypt security swoop ahead of 25 April protests

Egyptian security forces raided cafes in downtown Cairo and took activists from their homes on 22 April in a coordinated crackdown ahead of planned protests on 25 April over the transfer of the Tiran and Sanafir Islands to Saudi Arabia, prisoners' rights group Freedom for the Brave said in a statement on Facebook. According to the campaign, arrests were also reported in Alexandria and Gharbeyya province. On 15 April thousands took to the streets in defiance of the Sisi regime, raising demands for the release of political prisoners and justice for victims of disappearances and police killings alongside call for the return of the islands to Egyptian sovereignty. The crackdown is widely seen as a pre-emptive strike against the reviving confidence of political activists to take to the streets.

Labour lawyer and Haitham Mohamedain, a member of the Revolutionary Socialists, was among those arrested in a dawn raid on his home and reportedly detained in Al-Saf police station. According to lawyers supporting the detainees and their families, some of those arrested in the raids on downtown cafes were released Friday afternoon, while others are currently being interrogated by National Security officers.

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What you can do:

Send protest letters to the Egyptian authorities via the embassy of Egypt in your country calling for the immediate release of all the detainees.

P.S.

* <https://socialistworker.org/2016/04/25/egyptian-activists-face-arrest-before-protests>

<https://egyptsolidarityinitiative.org/2016/04/24/haitham-mohamedain-detained-for-15-days-as-egypt-crackdown-gathers-pace/>