

## [Egypt: Abort unfair mass trial and release protesters](#)

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(Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire) - Egypt should abort an unfair mass trial of 494 people for offences which carry the death penalty in connection with their alleged participation in protests in Cairo in August 2013, the International Service for Human Rights said today.

ISHR has [joined with five leading African human rights organisations](#)<sup>[1]</sup> to file an [amicus curiae brief](#) in support of an 'Emergency Communication' to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, submitted by Reprieve on behalf of Ibrahim Halawa and 493 Others (ACHPR/COMM/1846/14).

The brief calls on the African Commission to intervene to protect the 494 persons - who were arrested and charged for their alleged roles in violence during protests that took place on 16 and 17 August 2013 in the Ramisis area of central Cairo while exercising their rights to freedom of assembly, opinion and expression - from arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, a grossly unfair trial, and the risk of the death penalty.

'No person should face arrest or detention for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. We call on Egyptian authorities to immediately release all people detained in this regard,' said Clement Voulé, Head of ISHR's African Commission program.

'Where it is alleged that a person engaged in violence in the course of protests, such allegations should be investigated and, if charges are warranted, the person should be tried promptly by a competent and independent judiciary and accorded all the guarantees of due process and a fair trial, including access to a lawyer and equality of arms,' Mr Voulé said.

'The prolonged detention of persons, without access to a lawyer, in inhumane and degrading conditions and facing a mass sham trial for crimes which carry the death penalty, is manifestly incompatible with international human right standards and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.'

'We urge the African Commission to intervene to safeguard fundamental human rights in this case and call on the Egyptian authorities to ensure that no person face charges in connection with the exercise of their rights to freedom of expression, association or assembly and that any person facing charges is afforded all the guarantees of a fair trial,' Mr Voulé said.

Further details about the case of Ibrahim Halawa and the 493 others is available from Reprieve [here](#) and from Amnesty [here](#).

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*Photo: Mark Stedman via Photocall Ireland*

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[1] The other organisations supporting the amicus curiae brief are the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS), the Human Rights Institute of South Africa (HURISA), the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA), Le Réseau des Défenseur des Droits Humains en Afrique Centrale (REDHAC) and the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum.

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