



a joint programme  
**OMCT** **fidh**  
The Observatory  
for the Protection  
of Human Rights Defenders



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK  
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME  
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

## JOINT PRESS RELEASE

### EGYPT: Blogger detained by the military for denouncing the repression of the Maspero demonstration

Paris-Geneva-Copenhagen, November 3, 2011. *The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the Euromediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) condemn the judicial harassment by the military justice of two bloggers, Messrs. Alaa Abdel-Fatah and Bahaa Saber, and the continuing arbitrary detention of one of them, Mr. Alaa Abdel-Fatah.*

On November 3, 2011, the Military Appeal Court confirmed the pre-trial detention of Mr. **Alaa Abdel-Fatah** for a period of 15 days. On October 30, 2011, the Military Prosecutor summonsed for interrogation the two bloggers, Messrs. Alaa Abdel-Fatah and **Bahaa Saber** and later ordered the provisional detention of Mr. Alaa Abdel-Fatah for 15 days in the appeals prison of Bab El Khalq in Cairo pending further investigation and the provisional release of Mr. Bahaa Saber. The two bloggers who were interrogated on their involvement in the October 9 demonstration of Coptic-Christians held before the Maspero building downtown Cairo, which was severely repressed by the military forces, resulting in the death of 27 persons, refused to answer questions arguing that the Military Prosecutor did not have competence to interrogate civilians. The two are accused of "inciting violence against the armed forces" and "assaulting military personnel".

The two activists have been publicly criticising the fact that the Military Prosecution is in charge of investigating the Maspero clashes, in which military police would be involved and opposing the trial of civilians before military courts. On October 20, 2011, Mr. Alaa Abdel-Fatah, who was present during the October 9 demonstration, signed an article in the newspaper *al-Shourouk* in which he described the acts of violence perpetrated by the military and narrated the two days he spent in the Coptic Hospital Mortuary after the repression.

The Observatory and EMHRN recall that since the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces took over the police after January 28, nearly 12,000 civilians have been arrested and brought to trial before military tribunals, which fall short of minimum standards of fair trial and rights of defence.

Our organisations call upon the Egyptian authorities to allow the conduct of impartial and independent investigations into the "Maspero" killings, prosecute those responsible for the serious human rights violations that were committed and urge the Egyptian authorities to stop trying civilians before military courts, notably human rights defenders. Our organisations call upon the military authorities to immediately release Mr. Alaa Abdel-Fatah and stop the judicial harassment against Messrs. Alaa Abdel-Fatah and Bahaa Saber, as their detention and judicial harassment seem to merely aim at sanctioning their human rights activities, and more generally to conform to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights instruments ratified by Egypt.

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