

PRESS RELEASE

End arbitrary detentions of refugees

# EGYPT



## Press release

**Region:** Middle East And North Africa

**Country:** Egypt

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## **The Center for Refugee Solidarity stands in solidarity with the hunger strikers at Karmooz Police Station in Alexandria**

### **Egypt:** End arbitrary detentions of refugees

**On Feb. 9, 2015** at least 50 refugees detained at Karmooz police station in Alexandria, began an open hunger strike to protest against their arbitrary detention. The refugees have been kept in continuous detention after receiving a deportation order by Egypt's Homeland Security agency, despite an earlier order by the Public Prosecutor to release them. The lives of the hunger strikers will be put at grave risk if the Egyptian authorities continue to arbitrarily detain them.

The majority of the 74 refugees-detainees in Karmooz police station are a group of Syrian and Palestinian-Syrians that was arrested in early November 2014 by Egyptian coast guards. The group had left from Turkey by boat on 23 October aiming to reach Europe. Following a dispute between the smugglers, the refugees were left stranded on Nelson Island, 4 km north of Abu Qir, Alexandria. The Center for Refugee Solidarity reported on the incident at the time. After their arrest on 1 November, the Public Prosecutor ordered their release four days later on 5 November. Despite this, Egypt's Homeland Security issued orders for their deportation. For more than 100 days now, they have been held without charge at Karmooz police station. In addition to those arrested in early November, there are four Palestinian-Syrians – three of whom were arrested on 30 September 2014 and one on 17 September 2014 – and fifteen Somali nationals – one of whom was arrested on 25 August 2014 and the remaining fourteen were arrested on 1 December 2014.

Among those detained are fifteen minors, seven of whom are under ten years old and one of whom is ten months old. The ongoing detention of minors is a clear violation of the Egyptian Child Law No. 12 of 1996 and its amendment by Act 126 of 2008 as well as the GA Resolution No 45/113 on the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty.

**Nader G. Attar, Executive Director of the Center for Refugee Solidarity stresses** that *“forcibly returning refugees and asylum seekers puts them at high risk of persecution. Egypt is therefore in breach of several international instruments, such as the 1951 Refugee Convention and the principle of non-refoulement in particular. The Egyptian authorities should immediately release the refugees at Karmooz police station, repeal their deportation order and put an end to its practice of arbitrary detention”*.

The Center for Refugee Solidarity stands in solidarity with the hunger strikers and urges the Egyptian government to:

- **Immediately release all refugees held without charges in spite of the public prosecutor's release orders**
- **Drop all deportation orders issued in spite of the public prosecutor's release orders**
- **Repeal its tight visa restrictions for Syrian nationals**
- **Allow UNHCR to execute its protection mandate to include Palestinian refugees**