

## Press Release

**Region:** Middle East & North Africa

**Country:** Egypt

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To read the full report - A child in an Egyptian prison - see: <http://bit.ly/1PfNiWY>

## EGYPT: Immediately release Youssef Mohamed Aden

Since the 6th July 2015, Egyptian security forces have detained Youssef Mohamed Aden, a 17 year old Somalian, at Alexandria's Karmooz police station. Youssef Mohamed Aden, who fled Somalia after the militant Islamist group Al Shabab attempted to recruit him, has spoken to the Center for Refugee Solidarity about his detention and mistreatment at the hands of the Egyptian security forces.

Youssef was part of the Karmooz Refugees group, who went on open hunger strike to protest their detention conditions and to demand their freedom. While the other members of this group have all been resettled in Sweden, Germany or France, Youssef has been left behind and remains in detention. UNHCR Egypt had promised Youssef that they would follow up on his case and provide him with updates. However, Youssef has not heard from the organisation since. The Center notes and is concerned that UNHCR Egypt's response to this case has been totally inadequate.

Youssef was originally charged with illegal immigration and not holding valid identity papers. However, Egypt's decision to detain him violates the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which states that refugees should not be placed in immigration-related detention, irrespective of their legal status. Youssef's family are from a tribe which lives in the desert of Somalia, without access to government services which can provide identity documents. Furthermore, during his time in custody Youssef has suffered numerous human rights violations, the most serious of which include physical assaults at the hands of the Egyptian police. He informed the Center for Refugee Solidarity that this included an incident in which he was pepper sprayed directly in the eyes.

**The Center for Refugee Solidarity is deeply concerned for Youssef's well-being, and the well-being of the other African refugees detained with him, particularly Sediq Saleh Mohamed, another Somalian national, who is just 13 years old**

*Alia Al Ghussain, Researcher, Center for Refugee Solidarity, stresses that, "Youssef's status as an undocumented minor puts him in an extremely vulnerable position, particularly as he has not been separated from adults during his detention, which is a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child."*

The Center for Refugee Solidarity stands in solidarity with Youssef and urges that the following steps be taken to rectify this situation:

- **Egypt should immediately release Youssef and the other Africans detained at Karmooz, particularly Sediq Saleh Mohamed.**
- **Egypt should respect and follow the international laws which it has ratified, particularly the Convention on the Rights of the Child**
- **UNHCR Egypt should respect and fulfill its obligations in need of protection, in particular those who are arbitrarily detained**
- **The international community should work towards the release and resettlement of Youssef.**