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**The death of hunger striker Mustafa Qassem, while in custody, is a deliberate murder**

**The Egyptian authorities refused to release Qassem on health grounds, despite his critical condition**

**Following the death of Qassem, the number of detainees who died inside Egyptian detention facilities during the current regime's era rises to 788**

The Egyptian authorities continue to use its systematic administrative approach of abuses and violation of detention facilities. It turned these detention facilities into execution headquarters, where detainees are being killed slowly. In addition to being in inappropriate places for human detention, prison administration uses its repressive measures against detainees, most notably medical negligence and denial of basic rights.

Monday evening, January 13, the American-Egyptian detainee, hunger striker Mustafa Qassem Abdullah (born on 11 February 1965), breathed his last breath inside his detention facility at Tora Prison Complex, after his health deteriorated severely and he was denied the adequate treatment for his condition. He was also deprived of his right to release on health grounds guaranteed in the Prison Regulation Law.

Mustafa Qassem was randomly arrested from the vicinity of Rabaa Al-Adawiya Square on 14 August 2013, the day of Rabaa Al-Adawiya massacre. He was suffering from diabetes (first degree) at the time.

Qassem was one of the seven survivors of the deportation car massacre during which 37 detainees were killed on 17 August 2013. He remained in detention pending investigations for five years, until he was sentenced in September 2018



to 15 years imprisonment in an absurd trial that lacked the minimum standards of criminal justice and without any evidence. The injustice he faced led him to enter into a hunger strike, however the prison administration did not care about his deteriorating health until he passed away.

In their testimony to Arab Organization for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK), his family said, "Mustafa was suffering from diabetes - first degree- as well as disorders in the functions of the thyroid gland before his arrest. Following the arrest, and due to the inhuman conditions of detention the functions of his liver were affected and he was infected with Hepatitis A, and his health deteriorated severely amid complete disregard of his situation by the different departments to which he was transferred since his arrest (Tora reception prison, Tora investigation prison), which deliberately subjected him to medical negligence, while denying the access of the necessary medicines to him, which were very difficult to let in. He was also deprived of exercise and from visitations most of the time, and in a case that we were allowed to visit him, they used to transfer him from his prison to the Scorpion Prison where the visit takes place, and then they return him back to his detention facility".

The family added "After being sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in the Rabaa Al-Adaweya case on 07 September 2018, Mustafa declared beginning a hunger strike to protest the ruling, which was issued without having any evidence against him. As a result, his health condition deteriorated and he began to suffer from sugar comas and general weakness, amid medical negligence by the prison administration most of the time.

In May 2019 he was finally transferred to Tora Liman Prison Hospital, where he the lack of preparedness of the place and the neglect of doctors and nurses, in addition to being held in an unclean and contaminated room full of insects. Most of the time, they disregarded the dates and quantities of the drugs he was required to take.

On 07 January 2017 we were allowed to visit him, but his health condition was very poor, as he developed skin diseases, with constant vomiting, amid complete negligence by the hospital's medical staff"



AOHR UK asserted that Qassem had to relinquish his Egyptian citizenship once and for all, months after being sentenced to imprisonment, while keeping his American citizenship only, in order to benefit from the legal text that obliges the Egyptian authorities to hand over sentenced foreigners to their countries, but the Egyptian authorities refused to enforce the law.

Following the death of Mustafa Qassem, the number of detainees who died inside the Egyptian detention facilities during the current regime era rose to 788 due to medical negligence, poor conditions of detention and torture, including 3 people who died since the beginning of this year.

AOHR UK asserts that the recurrent deaths of detainees inside the Egyptian prisons, is clear evidence that these crimes are premeditated murder, given that many appeals from the families of those deceased to save their lives, the prison authorities' refusal to treat the sick detainees and refusing to release them, or enable their families to treat them at their expense.

AOHR UK asserts that should the inhuman prison conditions continue in the same way, the death of more detainees will result, especially as there is complete absence of any judicial control over these prisons, and all legal remedies for the detainees and their families are being blocked.

AOHR UK calls on the UN Secretary General and the Special Rapporteur on Arbitrary Detention to form a special committee to investigate the recurrent deaths among Egyptian detainees inside Egyptian detention facilities which clearly poses a threat to the lives of detainees inside.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)