

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friends and family of former Canadian student, father of four, call for his release from illegal detention in Egypt

Toronto-born wife, Sarah Attia urges other Canadians to support the campaign

Toronto, ON 27th December, 2013

Canadian professors, colleagues and friends of former Egyptian presidential aide, Khaled Al-Qazzaz have launched an internet campaign calling for his release from prison in Egypt. Khaled has been held by the military-backed government since July 3rd, 2013 without charges or access to his lawyer.

Khaled, a University of Toronto graduate and permanent resident of Canada, was detained along with nine other members of the presidential team following the military coup that ousted President Mohamed Morsi.

Five of them including Al-Qazzaz were being held at an undisclosed location without any charges, leading Human Rights Watch to characterize it as an “[enforced disappearance](#)” under international law. Last week, the aides were transferred to the notorious Tora and Akrab prisons.

Within its first week, the campaign gained nearly 3,500 supporters on its Facebook and Twitter pages, while over 600 people signed a [petition](#) to have Khaled released.

“Five senior aides, including Khaled [have been held] for the last 170 days without any charges brought against them,” said Khaled’s wife, Sarah Attia, in a statement published on the campaign’s website, <http://www.freekhaledalqazzaz.com> on December 21st, 2013. Attia, a Canadian citizen raised in Toronto, has been caring for their four children, the youngest of whom just turned one, without family or support in Cairo.

The petition was also signed by Canadian film-maker and recently released detainee John Greyson. “My own recent incarceration in Egypt’s prisons makes me especially sympathetic to Khaled and his family,” said Greyson.

In November, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detentions deemed the arrests and detention to be in contravention to rights guaranteed under Egyptian and international law, and called on Egypt to release Dr. Morsi and his advisors.

According to [Amnesty International](#), the three men risk facing trumped-up charges, after being held incommunicado for more than five months. “In fact, state-run newspapers are [pretending](#) that Khaled and the others were arrested last week”, said Eeman Attia, Sarah’s sister and spokesperson for the campaign. “That is absurd given that a Ministry of Interior spokesperson [admitted](#) on December 1st that they were being held in prison. We have not seen Khaled for over five months now.”

-more-

This Wednesday, a Human Rights Watch [report](#) confirmed that Khaled, along with two other presidential aides, have been transferred to solitary confinement at the Tora Maximum Security Prison, infamously used for extrajudicial renditions and torture during the Mubarak regime. “Tora prison authorities have denied access to the aides’ lawyers and relatives, preventing them from helping to ensure the men’s basic rights,” the report added.

Last week, U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel spoke with Egyptian army chief Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on the phone [expressing concern](#) about the lack of due process and continued detention of Morsi and other Brotherhood leaders.

Campaign organizers are urging individuals and groups who support human rights particularly in Egypt and Canada to sign the petition at chn.ge/JfLfol and ask their governments to put pressure on Egypt to release Khaled through diplomatic means.

-END-
(word count: 495)

For media inquiries

Eaman Attia (Family Member), Bangor, Maine, USA eaman_attia@hotmail.com, 207-570-8525
(available for press interviews in Toronto until December 31st)

Press package and hi-res pictures available at <http://www.freekhaledalqazzaz.com/contact-us/>

CC: local-media; Canada- media; Egypt-media; International-media; human-rights-groups