

President of Egypt
President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Egypt

Your Excellency,

I urge you to release Mahmoud Abu Zeid, better known as Shawkan, immediately and unconditionally with all charges against him dropped. He is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his journalistic work.

A photojournalist, he was covering a sit-in on 14 August 2013 in Cairo, when security forces swept in.

Police and army officers were deployed to disperse the Rabaa al-Adaweya sit-in, which Shawkan was photographing. It was Egypt's darkest day, resulting in the killing of more than 700 people from the Rabaa al-Adaweya sit-in alone. Up to 1,000 people were killed across the country.

When police found out Shawkan was a journalist, they arrested him. They beat him with a belt and their fists, and tied his wrists so tightly with a plastic ligature they bled, he has told Amnesty International in a letter published in April 2015. A few days later, when he was being transferred to a prison, he was kept in a parked truck for several hours under sweltering summer heat. He has been in detention for more than three years facing trumped-up charges and receiving inadequate health care. Please release him without delay.

Yours sincerely,