



## NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **The Advocates for Human Rights Urges Release of U.S. Citizen Near Death in Egyptian Prison**

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN (10//14) – The Advocates for Human Rights urges Egyptian authorities to either immediately release U.S. citizen Mohamed Soltan or follow due process by giving him a fair trial that is based on evidence of an actual crime. The Advocates also urges Egyptian authorities to provide Soltan with proper medical care; he is in critical health as a result of a hunger strike he has endured for more than 240 days.

Now the longest living person on a hunger strike in an Egyptian prison, Soltan was arrested by the Egyptian government in August 2013 while exercising his right to freedom of association and freedom of expression in support of former Egyptian President Mohammed Mori, according to Soltan's family. He began a hunger strike in January 2014 following a court hearing in Egypt at which a judge ordered the young man's continued detention even though no evidence was presented and no argument was made in the courtroom, according to the #Free\_Soltan website.

In addition to the lack of due process, Soltan is on a hunger strike to protest the brutality with which he has been treated. "The brutality has been mind boggling," he wrote in a message to his family early in his detention. "During the day, soldiers and police would get in two straight lines, and we would have to run in between them as they beat us with rocks and sticks. They roused anger amongst the officers by falsely proclaiming that we had killed police officers. The officers stripped off our pants and shirts as they beat us with clubs. They put us in jail cells with what must have been 60 other inmates, and it was terribly hot and water was not made available to us. I saw an inmate suffer a heart attack right before my eyes and not receive proper medical attention. The surgical wound on my arm was open and oozing, and not one of the guards seemed to care because I was labeled a political prisoner."

Soltan, 25 years old and a peace activist with citizenship in both the U.S. and Egypt, grew up in Kansas City, attended high school in Detroit, and graduated with an economics degree from Ohio State University. He traveled to Egypt in 2013 to participate in protests in connection with the overthrow of then-Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi. He began working as a media spokesman to report violations of security forces against pro-Morsi supporters.

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#### **About The Advocates for Human Rights**

For more than 30 years, The Advocates for Human Rights has promoted and protected human rights here at home and around the world. The non-profit organization, based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, documents human rights abuses, advocates on behalf of individual victims, provides free legal representation to people seeking asylum, works to prevent violence against women and girls, spearheads public policy and legal change, educates about human rights issues, and provides training and technical assistance to address and prevent human rights violations.