

# EGYPT:

## 1000+ days in jail for taking a photo

It was tense in the centre of Cairo on 14 August 2013. Demonstrators, angry that the government had thrown the former president out of office, filled a public square. Police were armed with teargas, bullets and even tanks.

In the middle of it all was Mahmoud Abu Zeid, better known as Shawkan. The photojournalist was doing his job: taking photos of the mayhem around him.

Suddenly violence erupted. "It was like a Hollywood movie," said Shawkan. "It felt like we were in the middle of a war." Except the bullets were real. The teargas was real. And the tanks descending on protests across Egypt were real. The security forces killed 1,000 people that day.

When police found out that Shawkan is a journalist, they grabbed him and tied his hands together with plastic cables that cut through his skin, bloodying his wrists. They punched him and used a belt to whip him. At one point, someone snapped a belt buckle across his eyes.

For taking photos, Shawkan was arrested, tortured and jailed. The many charges against him include "disturbing public peace" and "joining a criminal gang". His trial is ongoing. If he is found guilty, he could be sentenced to death.

Today Shawkan is in Cairo's Tora Prison. It is known for its terrible conditions. And although he has Hepatitis C, he isn't getting the medical care he needs.

It's been three years since Shawkan was jailed. When he appeared in court in May, he told the judge: "Taking pictures isn't a crime." He's right. Urge Egypt to drop all charges against Shawkan and free him immediately.

To take action, go to the next page.



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No one shall be subjected to torture.

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest.

Articles 5 & 9, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**WRITE  
FOR  
RIGHTS**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# Unleash your pens and keyboards!



## Please write to the Public Prosecutor.

- ◆ Start with Dear Counsellor.
- ◆ Describe who you are and what concerns you about the ongoing detention of Mahmoud Abu Zeid, or Shawkan.
- ◆ In your own words, ask him to drop all charges against Shawkan and release him without delay.

## Send your message to

Nabil Sadek  
Office of the Public Prosecutor  
Madinat Al-Rihab  
New Cairo, Egypt

Postage: \$2.50

## Please send a copy to

His Excellency Motaz Munir Zahran  
Ambassador for the Arab Republic of Egypt  
454 Laurier Avenue East  
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6R3

Postage: \$.85

Fax: (613) 234 9347 or (613) 234 4398

E-mail: [egyptemb@sympatico.ca](mailto:egyptemb@sympatico.ca)

## Show Shawkan he's not alone.

Write or tweet messages of support for Shawkan. He might like to know what freedom of expression means to you.

Free Shawkan  
Ahmed Abu Seif  
211 E. Ohio St. Apt #2523  
Chicago, Illinois 60611, USA

Postage: \$1.20

For Twitter solidarity please use  
#FreeShawkan

## Sample Tweet

I'm writing for photojournalist  
@ShawkanZeid facing #deathpenalty in  
#Egypt for taking photos @moiegy:  
#FreeShawkan! #W4R16 #Write4Rights

CANADA

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TAKE PART: [writeathon.ca](http://writeathon.ca)