

To: Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Dr. Essam Sharaf

Brussels, 7 October 2011

Dear Prime Minister,

We are extremely concerned about the criminal treatment of young activist blogger Maikel Nabil Sanad who is dying in the hands of the military authorities of Egypt. He was not released on the occasion of his appeal hearing today and the court case was postponed to October 11. Maikel Nabil Sanad was not able to attend the appeal hearing.

The new Egypt should not start with the victimizing of one of the initiators of the revolution.

Despite the international publicity, the political pressure and all efforts from Egyptian human rights groups and international organisations, Maikel Nabil Sanad remains imprisoned and his life is at imminent risk. He has been on hunger strike since 23 August, is in critical health condition and went from weighing 60 kilograms to 47. He said that if he is not released he will boycott the military judge, he will ask his lawyers to take no legal action in front of the military judge, and then he will start a thirst strike. "*Death is better than living in an oppressive country*", Maikel told his brother Mark the last time he saw him on his 26<sup>th</sup> birthday on Saturday.

Maikel Nabil Sanad was arrested by the military police on 28 March 2011 at his home in Cairo because he published a blog post on the role of the Egyptian military during and after the revolution. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on 10 April 2011 on charges of "insulting the military" in an unfair fast-track trial in a military court in absence of his lawyer, family and friends. He is still detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Maikel Nabil Sanad was moved to solitary confinement, instead of being transferred to the prison hospital. We are extremely worried about his health as he has a heart and blood pressure condition requiring daily medication. His poor health is obviously rapidly deteriorating.

*«I will not accept any more injustice, and if my death is the price to be paid to put an end to the excesses of the Military Justice Administration, then it is a small price to pay»*, Maikel Nabil Sanad stated in El-Marg Public Prison on 23 August 2011.

Egypt is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right to a fair trial in article 14, and freedom of opinion and expression in article 19. The interim constitution of Egypt also guarantees the right to freedom of expression, and the freedom of the press. On 21 July 2011, the Human Rights Committee of the United Nations underlined that "*States parties should not prohibit criticism of institutions, such as the army or the administration.*"

The trials of civilians before military courts are definitely not fair trials. In Egypt more than 12.000 civilians have been referred to military trials following the '25 January revolution'.

Young activist Sahar Maher, Maikel Nabil Sanad's girlfriend, also faces intimidation and persecution by the Egyptian military authorities. She was arrested today and was detained for several hours. She will appear before military court on October 11 charged with taking pictures in military facilities and illegal assembly of more than 5

persons, according to Mubarak-era emergency law which was reverted to its original scope by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces in September 2011.

We urge you, dear Prime Minister, to intervene personally in this case and to end this unjust and appalling persecution of Maikel Nabil Sanad. We urge you to release immediately and unconditionally Maikel Nabil Sanad and all other political prisoners in Egypt. We urge you to stop the military trials of civilians and end the state of emergency which violates the freedom of expression, association and assembly.

Yours sincerely,

1. **MICHAEL TREMOPOULOS**, MEP GREENS/EFA
2. **RAMON TREMOSA I BALCELLS**, MEP ALDE
3. **EDWARD MCMILLAN-SCOTT** (MEP ALDE, UK), European Parliament Vice-President responsible for Democracy and Human Rights
4. **NIKOLAOS CHOUNTIS**, MEP GUE/NGL
5. **IVO VAJGL**, MEP ALDE
6. **WILLY MEYER**, MEP GUE/NGL
7. **PHILIPPE DE BACKER**, MEP ALDE
8. **HELENE FLAUTRE**, MEP GREENS/EFA
9. **JAN PHILIPP ALBRECHT**, MEP GREENS/EFA
10. **VINCENZO IOVINE**, MEP ALDE
11. **MALIKA BENARAB-ATTOU**, MEP GREENS/EFA