

Your Excellency;

I am writing this to express my grave concern on the trial of Egyptian photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid, known as "Shawkan". He is a defendant in a mass trial along with 738 others. He has been charged with nine offences, including murder, which puts him at risk of the death penalty if convicted. So far, no evidence has been presented to establish that Mahmoud Abu Zeid is responsible for the offences.

He was arrested 14 August 2013 with two foreign journalist while on assignment for London-based photo agency Demotix. They were released on the same day but he is still detained. I am very afraid of his health condition, since he was diagnosed with Hepatitis C before his arrest.

So I urge you to ensure that all charges against Mahmoud Abu Zeid are withdrawn, and to release him immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

I also urge you to protect Mahmoud Abu Zeid from torture and other ill-treatment for so long as he remains in detention.

The last, but not the least, I urge you to order an independent and impartial investigation into allegations that he has been beaten and tortured in custody, and bring those responsible to justice in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty.

Your prompt attention on this matter would be highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,