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EGYPT Time is running out for detainees held under emergency law

CSW is urging the Egyptian government to release nine Ahmadiyya Muslims held under Emergency Law since 15 March. According to local sources, they may be excluded from a planned release on 6 June of others held under this legislation. They have suffered torture including verbal abuse, beatings and electrical shocks.

This is the first time that Ahmadiyyas, a minority sect of Islam, have been arrested by the authorities in Egypt, although the community was recently subject to religiously-motivated attacks on two mosques in Pakistan on 28 May.

Egyptian Emergency Law is designed to address crimes of terrorism and drug trafficking, however the detainees are being investigated for the charge of “contempt of religions” under the penal code and have been interrogated about their personal beliefs. It is therefore unclear why the Emergency Laws have been invoked at all. Access to the nine has been restricted and lawyers have only been able to speak to two of them so far. To date no charges have been brought.

CSW’s Advocacy Director, Tina Lambert said, “Our sources inform us that the Egyptian government plans to release all other Emergency Law detainees in three days. However, as the Ahmadiyyas are being investigated for “contempt of religions”, their future is in doubt. Their detention and treatment violates international standards of human rights as well as the appropriate application of national legislation. CSW calls for their immediate and unconditional release.”