

Al-Shater Responds to Media Reports About His Health



The following is a statement from Khairat Al-Shater and the other MB defendants currently on trial before the military court responding to reports published by Al-Ahram, Al-Akhbar pro-government newspapers on Sep 5, regarding his medical condition. The newspapers downplayed a recent statement issued by Amnesty International warning of the deteriorating health of Khairat al Shater inside the prison due to poor medical care.

“Regarding reports published by Egyptian newspapers Al-Ahram and Al-Akhbar on Sep 5 regarding the health condition of engineer Khairat Al-Shater and the alleged inaccuracy of the Amnesty International reports in this regard, we would like to state the following :

First: What Amnesty International published is only a small part of the truth around the medical condition of engineer Khairat Al Shater. He first developed infection in his feet as result of ulcers above and below the foot and in between the toes which was complicated by his uncontrolled blood sugar. He received an extensive antibiotic therapy for three weeks which controlled the infection but did not cure the ulcers which are caused by poor diabetes care.

This clearly contradicts what the newspapers claimed to be a minor fungal infection between his toes. The prison doctors had only examined Al Shater when he began to show signs of improvement towards the end of his treatment course prescribed by MB doctors and surgeons who are imprisoned with him led by Dr. Mahmoud Abu Zeid, a

vascular surgery professor.

It is well known in the medical field that an infection in the feet of diabetic patients, especially when it is associated with ulcerations, poses real risk to the health of the foot which might lead to gangrene and the loss of the limb, in addition to threatening the patient's life if it reaches the blood stream.

Second: Muslim Brothers have never at any time tried to exaggerate their illnesses or make up ones to gain sympathy or support to their cause. They normally seek treatment by the doctors detained with them, and avoiding the prison hospital or doctors except in cases which require emergency treatment not available inside prison cells.

The case applies to engineer Khairat Al-Shater who did not use the prison clinic despite his multiple medical problems.

Third: The medical report published by both newspapers contained several errors regarding the level of medical care offered to the prisoners, which we would like to clarify,

- The report mentioned that Khairat Al-Shater receives regular medical checkups by the prison medical doctors which is totally untrue. None of the prison doctors have examined him ahead of issuing the medical report in question; therefore, all its medical findings are false. It is only when Amnesty International released its warning that the prison administration was pressured to act to evaluate the level of medical care and conditions.

- The medical report also concluded that Al Shatter does not suffer of any heart or lung problems, which is also untrue. Again, none of these doctors who wrote that report had examined Mr. Al Shatter, and no test was ever done to evaluate the condition of his heart and lungs even despite the fact that Mr. Al shatter is showing signs and symptoms of coronary heart disease, heart failure and bronchial asthma, and his blood pressure was totally out of control. Standard medical care for diabetic patients who suffer of such additional medical problems would have required that Mr. Al shatter undergo necessary medical testing including but not limited to a stress testing of his heart and blood work to ensure that his internal organs, mainly the heart and kidneys, are working properly. Mr. Al shatter received none of these medically necessary testing. His request to be transported to civilian hospital under military escort to receive badly needed medical care was rejected in vein by the government.

Fourth: The following is a list of medical problems for Mr. Al shatter,

- Diabetes and which is uncontrolled due to poor medical care inside the prison which led to diabetic foot ulcers and infection threatened him with gangrene and risk of infection spreading to his blood stream. Other complications of diabetes include peripheral neuropathy (loss of sensation in both feet and hands which is associated with pain)

- Hypertension which is being treated by medication but it most of the time gets out of control especially due to high temperature, humidity and stress.

- Chronic bronchitis and severe breathing difficulties which require urgent therapeutic intervention with breathing machines and pumps, in addition to oral medications

- Kidney stones causing severe renal colic intermittently. The prison doctor ordered him to have special x⁻ rays (IVP) to help treat the stones but this hasn't happened so far.

- Cardiomyopathy (weakness in his heart muscle) according to an ultrasound done on the heart.

- Thyroid hormone deficiency requiring a lifetime hormone replacement and routine blood work to check the level of these hormones and consequently adjust the dose of medication.

- High cholesterol and Triglycerides in blood.

Fifth: Engineer Khairat Al-Shatter is not the only medically ill person among those referred to the military court. The following is a brief report of the medical condition of the rest of the group, again to confirm that what the Amnesty International report pointed to is only a little part of the truth:

– A brief summary of the health status of the 33 detainees in military custody:

- Although more than half the detainees are over 50 years old, but they suffer from multiple medical problems including,

- 21 suffer of high blood pressure. Although they receive regular medications, but it goes off limits most of the time.

- Seven suffer of diabetes, in addition to the difficulty in controlling the glucose level due to lack of proper meals in prison. Four individuals suffer from diabetic complications including a peripheral neuropathy, diabetic foot and retinopathy (poor vision due to bleeding vessels inside the retina caused by diabetes)

- Coronary insufficiency: 6 individuals suffer from cardiac diseases. Five of them require a diagnostic cardiac catheter. Stents were placed for one of them while in prison. Another is waiting for an “urgent” bypass surgery.

- Enlargement of the Prostate gland, 4 individuals.

- Hepatitis C infection of the liver (two detainees), slipped disc in lumbar vertebrae (6 individuals), an ulcer in the stomach with bleeding inside prison (one individual), motion sickness (one individual), glaucoma (one individual), kidney stones (one individual), gallstones (one individual), chronic bronchitis and chest allergy (one individual) .

A More Detailed Report about Health Condition of 7 other seriously ill individuals:

- Dr. Mohamed Ali Beshr (56 years) suffers from active hepatitis C infection which was discovered along with a hepatic fibrosis while in prison. Liver specialists who examined him suggested treating him with Interferon. He suffers also from gallstones which require surgery but his hepatic fibrosis prevents him from having such a surgery.

- Hassan Malek (49 years) suffers from: uncontrolled blood pressure. He also suffers from coronary insufficiency which caused angina pectoris (chest pain) and requires a cardiac catheterization. In addition, he has high cholesterol.

- Dr. Essam Hashish (57 years) suffers from repeated drop in his blood pressure, and a coronary insufficiency (poor blood supply to his heart) which causes chest pain (angina pectoris). The heart catheter showed 90% blockage in

three main arteries around his heart. A stent was placed while in prison. He also suffers from a stress ulcer in the stomach which caused a severe bleeding while in prison. This condition requires an urgent endoscopic surgery to stop the bleeding.

– Hassan Zalat (56 years) suffers from diabetes and elevated blood pressure and a coronary insufficiency which caused an acute angina pectoris. He underwent a heart catheter and he is currently to undergo an “urgent” bypass surgery.

– Fathi Al Baghdadi (53 years): Diabetes and elevated blood pressure, glaucoma and retinal disease caused by diabetes. He also suffers from diabetic foot ulcers which he developed in prison, and has been treating for six months. In addition to coronary insufficiency. He also has a high cholesterol level.

– Dr. Amir Bassam (43 years) suffers from diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary insufficiency, cardiomyopathy, and a slipped disc in his lower back.

– Engineer Said Saad (50 years) suffers from a chronic hepatitis C

It is worth mentioning that all above mentioned diseases are documented according to medical reports and diagnostic studies

Finally, we don't publish this information to gain others' sympathy. For over nine months since we have been in prison, we haven't talked about our medical conditions, however, we decided to issue this statement today when these two newspapers published an inaccurate medical report of our health in order to score political points and to cover up the government's inaction regarding the deteriorating medical conditions inside prison cells.

Stressing that we are thrown in prison to pay the price of doing our duty to reform this homeland, we confirm that we will endure our suffering and endure our imprisonment and we still stick to our principles and message, insisting that we will continue to support our religion and serve our people.

Engineer Khairat Al-Shater, fellow MBs



Military Case no. 2 of the year 2007