

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 165/08 (MDE 12/011/2008, 12 June 2008) and follow-up (MDE 12/013/2008, 16 June 2008) - Forcible return/Fear of torture or other ill-treatment

EGYPT

Up to 1,200 Eritrean asylum-seekers

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Up to 1,200 Eritrean asylum-seekers were forcibly returned to Eritrea between 12 and 19 June. Reports from Eritrea indicate that most of the men who were returned and some of the single women have been detained in military training camps in the remote and dry area of We'a. The returned women with children and those who were pregnant are believed to have been released after some weeks in detention.

Egypt has not disclosed exactly how many people were forcibly returned. According to information available to Amnesty International, about 425 were deported from Aswan International Airport on three special Egypt Air flights in the early hours of 12 June, 13 June and 14 June to Massawa military base. Another 400 were deported to Eritrea from Cairo airport on 18 June and 380 others on 19 June also from Cairo airport. Other flights were also reported on 15 June.

About 130 Eritrean asylum-seekers are still held at Shallal central security forces camp in Aswan, southern Egypt, in addition to 49 Ethiopians. Following appeals from Amnesty International and others, on 15 June Egypt announced that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Egypt would be granted access to all asylum-seekers. Following the UNHCR's visit to Shallal camp, the 179 were able to apply for refugee status and their applications are now pending decisions from the Egyptian authorities. UNHCR does not have access to any Eritreans in other places of detention across Egypt.

**No further action is requested. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for this group of people through other means, including Urgent Actions. Many thanks to those who sent appeals.**