

Beat: Politics

U.S. Embassy employee in Cairo held without charges for weeks

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USPA News - Egyptian authorities arrested a local U.S. Embassy employee in Cairo last month and have held him in detention for nearly three weeks without charges, U.S. officials said on Wednesday. Mofid Deak, a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, said Ahmed Aleiba was arrested on January 25. "We are confirming that a locally employed embassy staffer has been held in detention since January 25th. To the best of our knowledge, he has not been charged with anything," he said.

Deak said Aleiba had not been granted diplomatic immunity, a form of legal immunity that ensures diplomats are not susceptible to lawsuit or prosecution under the host country's laws. "He is locally employed, and a local hire. By definition those employees do not have diplomatic immunity," the spokesman said. Egyptian media last year reported that Aleiba had helped arrange meetings between U.S. officials and leaders of the recently-outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. A CNN report from September 2011 indicates Aleiba may also have worked as a correspondent for Egyptian state TV in the past. But Deak could not confirm whether or not those descriptions were accurate. "We cannot really talk in details about the nature of the jobs of our employees. They do all kinds of chores within the bounds of their job description here," he said. "We have been in touch with the government of Egypt ever since this happened, trying to learn more about the circumstances of his arrest and more about the nature of the charges against him, if any. That process is still continuing," said Deak when questioned about the steps the Embassy has taken to ensure Aleiba's release.

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