

Mubarak Is Transferred Back to Prison
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By Rod Nordland

CAIRO — Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's former president, was abruptly moved from the relative comfort of a military hospital back to prison on Monday after the country's public prosecutor ruled that he was fit to serve his time behind bars.

A medical committee that was convened to review Mr. Mubarak's medical condition decided that he needed only routine medical care, according to a statement on Monday by Adel el-Said, the spokesman for the prosecutor. That finding apparently ruled out a transfer abroad or to another medical facility, which Mr. Mubarak's lawyers have demanded.

Within hours, according to officials at Tora Prison in Cairo, Mr. Mubarak was transferred back there.

An earlier order by the same prosecutor, Abdel Meguid Mahmoud, allowed Mr. Mubarak to be transferred to the military hospital on June 19, after Mr. Mubarak had served 17 days of his life sentence in prison.

An official reached by telephone in the office of Mr. Mubarak's lawyers, who declined to identify himself, said the lawyers were unaware of the new order.

The June 19 transfer to the hospital came after a state news agency, MENA, published what turned out to be a false report that Mr. Mubarak was clinically dead after having a heart attack and stroke in prison. His lawyers later said he had merely slipped in the prison bathroom and suffered a minor hemorrhage.

For weeks afterward, however, there were conflicting reports, most of them based on rumor and unconfirmed by officials, that Mr. Mubarak was in a coma or near-coma, or that he had recovered, or that he was never very sick at all. The military's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces issued a statement merely confirming that Mr. Mubarak had not died.

On July 4, Mr. Mahmoud announced that he would form an expert committee to review Mr. Mubarak's condition and decide whether hospitalization was necessary.

The statement from his spokesman's office on Monday said the medical committee, made up of university and medical professors and prison service doctors, had reviewed the medical condition of Mr. Mubarak, who is 84, and had performed additional tests.

"The committee unanimously decided that Mubarak's health condition is stable, and considers it appropriate from the medical perspective to serve his sentence," the statement said. "He does not need to stay in Maadi Military Hospital or any other advanced medical facility."

It added that Mr. Mahmoud had notified officials at the prison and the Ministry of Interior to make the necessary arrangements.

Mr. Said, the prosecutor's spokesman, did not return repeated phone calls made to try to get him to elaborate on whether the committee had found that Mr. Mubarak had recovered or had been faking illness.

Although Mr. Mahmoud was appointed during Mr. Mubarak's tenure, he issued an order early in the uprising suspending the assets of Mubarak family members and brought the criminal case against Mr. Mubarak for his role as an accessory in the killings of protesters, which led to his conviction and life sentence.

"What's interesting about this is we really have no idea what's going on," said Hani Shukrallah, a writer and editor of Ahram Online, an independent news agency. "Someone must know, but outside the black box of the military and intelligence services, we the public really don't know anything. There's no compelling evidence he was in Tora Prison to start with, and then all this thing about his heart stopped, which seemed just a setup to get him out. For all we know, it may be true, but there is a feeling throughout this whole Mubarak thing that we are being played."

Mai Ayyad contributed reporting.

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