

Egypt pro-reform activist sentenced to six months in jail

Ahmad Abu Duma was sentenced to six months behind bars but granted bail of 300 Egyptian pounds (53 dollars, 42 euros).

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Cairo: A Cairo court on Saturday sentenced a pro-reform activist to six months in jail, accusing him of assaulting a police officer, in a verdict denounced by his lawyer as political.

Ahmad Abu Duma was sentenced to six months behind bars but granted bail of 300 Egyptian pounds (53 dollars, 42 euros), a judicial source told AFP.

Defence lawyer Hamdi Al Assyuti said he expected his client to be released once the bail had been paid, adding that he would appeal the verdict.

Abu Duma was among 100 protesters and opposition MPs at a demonstration earlier this month calling for political reforms in Egypt, where President Hosni Mubarak has ruled since 1981 under a state of emergency.

He was arrested after a melee erupted when about 20 demonstrators tried to break through a police cordon, throwing bottles and placards at officers who responded with punches and kicks.

Al Assyuti said the charges were "fabricated" because Abu Duma belongs to the opposition April 6 movement, a youth group which has been calling for democratic reforms and supports former UN nuclear watchdog chief and Egyptian dissident Mohammad Al Baradei.