

## **Egypt blogger jailed for 'insult'**

An Egyptian court has sentenced an internet blogger to four years' prison for insulting Islam and the president. Abdel Kareem Soliman's trial was the first time that a blogger had been prosecuted in Egypt.

He had used his weblog to criticise the country's top Islamic institution, the al-Azhar university and President Hosni Mubarak, whom he called a dictator.

A human rights group called the verdict "very tough" and a "strong message" to Egypt's thousands of bloggers.

Mr Soliman, 22, was tried in his native city of Alexandria. He blogs under the name of Kareem Amer.

A former student at al-Azhar, he called the institution "the university of terrorism" and accused it of suppressing free thought.

The university expelled him in 2006 and pressed prosecutors to put him on trial.

During the five-minute court session the judge said Soliman was guilty and would serve three years for insulting Islam and inciting sedition, and one year for insulting Mr Mubarak.

Egypt arrested a number of bloggers who had been critical of the government during 2006, but they were all freed.

"This is a strong message to all bloggers who are put under strong surveillance that the punishment will very strong," Hafiz Abou Saada of the Egyptian Human Rights Organisation told Associated Press.

**Story from BBC NEWS:**

**[http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle\\_east/6385849.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/6385849.stm)**

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