

Advocacy dossier

Ahmed Amasha

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Detained (pretrial) **Egypt**

Ahmed Amasha is a veterinarian, trade unionist, and co-founder of the League for Families of the Disappeared. He was arrested in 2011, 2017 and 2020, disappeared and tortured. After detention from 2017 to 2019, he has been held since June 2020 on terrorism charges, and his trial has not ended.

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The case at a glance

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Status	Arrested	Country
Detained (pretrial)	**17 Jun 2020**	**Egypt**

Charges Belonging to a banned group (2017 case)
Knowingly joining a terrorist group and printing and recording materials promoting its aims (Case 1360/2019, from July 2020; referral in August 2022 also cites funding)

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Release Ahmed Amasha immediately and unconditionally.

02 Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights.

03 Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention.

04 Provide Ahmed Amasha with immediate, independent medical evaluation and the full treatment that condition requires, including transfer to an independent civilian hospital if necessary.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

Arbitrary detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9

Denial of family visits UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), Rule 58

Denial of legal counsel International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3)

Denial of medical care UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), Rules 24 to 27

Enforced disappearance International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Article 2
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 9, 16

Gender based violence Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, General Recommendation No. 35
Convention against Torture, Article 1

Inhumane detention conditions International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 10
UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules)

Judicial harassment UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12

Physical assault International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 7, 9

Prolonged pretrial detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)

Threats and intimidation UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12

Torture Convention against Torture, Articles 1, 2
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 7

Unfair trial International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

03

How the case unfolded

2011

Arrest

Arrested and detained in 2011

He was arrested and detained in 2011. Details of this detention have not been published.

2017

UN opinion or decision

UN Working Group finds 2017 detention arbitrary

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, in Opinion 78/2017, found his 2017 detention arbitrary and called for his release.

10 March 2017

Arrest

Arrested at checkpoint in Nasr City

Police arrested Ahmed Amasha at a checkpoint in Nasr City, Cairo, and forcibly disappeared him. He was held incommunicado in an undisclosed location for twenty-two days, and his family was denied any information about his whereabouts or condition.

April 2017

Reappearance in custody

Reappeared before prosecutor after torture

After twenty-two days of enforced disappearance and torture, he reappeared before the Public Prosecutor in Tagamo' El Khames. He was interrogated without a lawyer and charged with belonging to a banned group and with terrorism-related offenses. His lawyers were denied access to the evidence file.

April 2017

Transfer between places of detention

Transferred to Tora Prison

Following his appearance before the prosecutor, he was transferred to Tora Prison, where he remained in detention.

May 2017

UN urgent appeal

UN Special Procedures appeal issued

UN Special Procedures issued an appeal to Egyptian authorities concerning his abduction, torture, and arbitrary detention.

4 October 2019

Release on bail ordered

Released on bail with reporting conditions

A court ordered his provisional release on bail. He was required to report to a police station twice weekly as a condition of release.

17 June 2020

Arrest

Re-arrested at his Cairo home and forcibly disappeared

On 17 June 2020, police took Dr Ahmed Amasha from his home in Cairo without a warrant, blindfolded him, and took him to an unknown location. He was tortured, and his family lost contact with him; he was forcibly disappeared for a second time until he was brought before the Supreme State Security Prosecution on 12 July 2020.

12 July 2020

Reappearance in custody

Reappeared before SSSP with torture marks

After twenty-five days of enforced disappearance, he reappeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution bearing visible signs of torture. He was charged with joining a terrorist group in Case No. 1360 of 2019.

7 December 2020

Access to counsel denied

Lawyer glimpses him in Tora Aqrab 2

His lawyer was permitted a brief, distant glimpse of him through glass at Tora Maximum Security Prison 2 (Aqrab 2), among approximately 250 detainees. No communication was allowed.

March 2021

Medical care denied

Prison refuses surgery outside the prison

He was referred to a university hospital for surgery, but the prison refused to allow it and no operation took place.

29 August 2022

Referral to trial

Referred to terrorism circuit; added to Case 1360/2019

On 29 August 2022, Dr Amasha was referred to the terrorism circuit of the Supreme State Criminal Court on charges of "knowingly joining and funding a terrorist group", and his name was added to the existing Case No 1360/2019, which includes 37 other defendants. The trial case is no. 4743 of 2022 (Shorouk felonies).

15 September 2022

Transfer between places of detention

Transferred to Badr prison; held in solitary

In September 2022, Dr Amasha was transferred from Tora high-security prison to the new Badr prison, located about 65 km east of Cairo. He has been held in isolation, in a cell with continuous electric lighting and 24-hour camera surveillance, with little time for outdoor exercise. His physical condition has been deteriorating: he suffers from diabetes and other age-related ailments and has not received adequate medical attention.

3 October 2022

Hearing

Trial opens before the Supreme State Security Criminal Court

25 October 2022

Hunger strike begins

Joins hunger strike in Badr prison

On 25 October 2022, Dr Amasha's family learned that he had joined other detainees in Badr prison in a hunger strike to protest prison conditions.

11 November 2022

UN special procedures communication

Joint UN communication to Egypt on his case

UN experts, including the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, sent a joint communication to Egypt about his case.

16 April 2023

Terrorist list designation

Placed on Egypt's terrorist list for five years

A Cairo criminal court decision of 12 April 2023, published in the Official Gazette on 16 April 2023, placed him with 1,526 other people on Egypt's terrorist list for five years.

25 February 2024

Hearing postponed

Trial adjourned for defence pleadings

The Third Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court, sitting at Badr prison, adjourned his trial in case 4743 of 2022 (Shorouk felonies) to 14 April 2024 for the defence pleadings, after several earlier postponements.

20 December 2024

Context

Government tells UN he is held at Badr 3

In its reply to the UN Working Group, the government accused him of Muslim Brotherhood membership and said he is held at the Badr 3 rehabilitation centre.

August 2025

UN opinion or decision

UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention finds detention arbitrary

At its session of 25 to 29 August 2025, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted Opinion 56/2025 (Egypt), finding the detention of human rights defender Ahmed Amasha arbitrary under international human rights law. The advance version was published on 23 October 2025. The opinion followed a petition filed by the Human Rights Foundation.

12 December 2025

Context

Still held at Badr prison without a verdict

Following the UN Working Group's opinion, the Human Rights Foundation reported that he remained held at Badr prison, detained for more than five years without a sentence, with his trial in its third year.

04

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: this record was checked on 12 November 2026. Ahmed Amasha remains held at Badr prison, where his trial before the Third Terrorism Circuit in case 4743 of 2022 has continued since October 2022 without a verdict; in October 2025 the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention published Opinion 56/2025 finding his detention arbitrary. He co-founded the League of Families of the Disappeared, whose coordinator Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy has also been detained.

Background and Work

Ahmed Amasha is a veterinarian and prominent trade union organiser who has worked for decades on labour rights, political freedoms, and environmental advocacy in Egypt. He became a member of Kefaya, one of the country's most visible opposition movements, calling for democratic reform and an end to authoritarian rule. His activism extended to environmental campaigns that challenged both state and private-sector interests.

In response to the wave of enforced disappearances that intensified in Egypt after 2013, he co-founded the League for Families of the Disappeared. The organisation provides legal advice to relatives of victims, helps file complaints with domestic and international bodies, and documents patterns of arbitrary detention and secret custody. This work made him a repeated target of state security agencies.

First Arrest, Enforced Disappearance, and Torture

On 10 March 2017, police arrested Ahmed Amasha at a checkpoint in Nasr City, Cairo, and forcibly disappeared him. He was held in an undisclosed location for twenty-two days. During that period he was subjected to repeated electric shocks, sexual assault, constant handcuffing and blindfolding, and explicit threats of violence against his wife and daughters. These acts were designed to force him to sign a pre-written confession.

On 1 April 2017, he reappeared before the Public Prosecutor in Tagamo' El Khames, Cairo. He was interrogated without a lawyer present and charged with belonging to a banned group. He was then transferred to Tora Prison, where he remained in detention for more than two years.

In May 2017, UN Special Procedures issued an appeal to Egyptian authorities concerning his abduction, torture, and arbitrary detention. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention later issued Opinion No. 78/2017, concluding that his detention was arbitrary and calling for his immediate release. Between 2017 and 2023, the UN Secretary-General highlighted his case repeatedly in annual reports on reprisals against individuals who cooperate with UN human rights mechanisms.

Provisional Release and Restrictions

On 4 October 2019, a court ordered his provisional release on bail. The release was conditional: he was required to report to a police station twice weekly. For nine months he lived under these restrictions, unable to travel freely, under continuous administrative surveillance.

Second Arrest and Enforced Disappearance

On 17 June 2020, security officers came to his

home in Cairo, blindfolded him, and took him to an unknown location. His family received no information about his whereabouts. On 12 July 2020, he reappeared at the offices of the Supreme State Security Prosecution. He bore visible signs of torture. He was charged in Case No. 1360 of 2019 with joining a terrorist group, a charge routinely used to criminalise human rights and opposition activity in Egypt. He was then transferred to an undisclosed location.

On 7 December 2020, his lawyer was permitted a brief glimpse of him through glass at Tora Maximum Security Prison 2, known as Aqrab 2. He was among approximately 250 detainees. The lawyer was not permitted to speak with him.

Prolonged Pre-Trial Detention and Health Deterioration

Ahmed Amasha remained in pre-trial detention in Tora Prison for more than two years. He was denied adequate medical care, sufficient food, sunlight, and access to his family and legal counsel. His health, already compromised by the torture he suffered in 2017 and 2020, continued to deteriorate. His family does not know whether he is receiving the medication and treatment he requires.

In August 2022, after more than two years without trial, he was formally charged with terrorism offences in direct retaliation for his human rights work.

Transfer to Badr Prison and Punitive Conditions

In September 2022, he was transferred to Badr Prison. Since then he has been held under punitive conditions that include prolonged solitary confinement, continuous electric lighting, and round-the-clock camera surveillance. These measures constitute cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment under international law.

Family visits remain severely restricted. His family has been subjected to threats by security personnel, compounding the psychological harm inflicted on the entire family.

Ongoing Detention and International Violations

Ahmed Amasha has been detained since June 2020 without a verdict. His trial has dragged on without resolution, violating his right to a prompt and fair hearing. The repeated renewals of his pre-trial detention and the recycling of charges amount to punishment without conviction.

His continued imprisonment is the direct result of his work defending the families of the disappeared, organising labour, and advocating for political change. The combination of enforced disappearance, torture, sexual violence, threats against his family, prolonged arbitrary detention, and inhuman conditions place him at grave and ongoing risk.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/ahmed-amasha/

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