ADVOCACY DOSSIER

AHMED HAMDY ABOU ZEID AL-TANOUBI

أحمد حمدي أبو زيد الطنوبي

Detained (pretrial) **Egypt**

Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi is a journalist, trade unionist, and researcher at the Arab Observatory for Media Freedom who has spent years defending the rights of detained colleagues. He has been detained almost without a break since December 2017 and is now on trial in the Mekameleen 2 case.

HuMENA.

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Case reference HM-EG-2020-005

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi is a journalist, trade unionist, and researcher at the Arab Observatory for Media Freedom who has spent years defending the rights of detained colleagues. He has been detained almost without a break since December 2017 and is now on trial in the Mekameleen 2 case.

STATUS	**Detained (pretrial)**
ARRESTED	**24 Mar 2020**
COUNTRY	**Egypt**
CHARGES	**Case 977 of 2017 (Mekameleen 2): membership in the Muslim Brotherhood and producing and spreading misleading media content (referred to trial on 22 December 2024)** **Case 621 of 2018: spreading false news and participating in a terrorist group**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Release Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi 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 Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi with immediate, independent medical evaluation and the full treatment that condition requires, including transfer to an independent civilian hospital if necessary.

Latest updates on this case
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/ahmed-hamdy-abou-zeid-al-tanoubi/

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DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Arbitrary detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9
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
Inhumane detention conditions	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 10 UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules)
Press freedom violation	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19
Prolonged pretrial detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)
Unfair trial	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

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HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

31 January 2015

ARREST

Arrested at a Cairo metro station

Police arrested him at a Cairo metro station. He was charged with incitement against the government, taking part in illegal protests and belonging to an illegal group.

9 June 2015

RELEASE

Released on bail

A Giza court ordered his release on bail on 4 June 2015, and he was freed on 9 June.

21 December 2017

ARREST

Arrested and disappeared before appearing in the Mekameleen 2 case

He was arrested and, after more than 40 days of enforced disappearance, appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution in Case No. 977 of 2017 (Mekameleen 2), accused of spreading false news.

27 January 2020

RELEASE

Freed after more than two years in pretrial detention

A release order was issued in Case No. 977 of 2017 on 10 December 2019, and he was freed on 27 January 2020.

24 March 2020

ARREST

Arrested again in a home raid

Security forces raided his home in Kafr El-Sheikh at dawn and arrested him. He was charged in State Security Case No. 621 of 2018 with spreading false news and participating in a terrorist group, and sent to Tora prison.

1 September 2020

CONTEXT

Father arrested and disappeared

His father was arrested and disappeared for about 50 days before appearing before the Supreme State Security Prosecution. He was later released.

2024

MEDICAL CARE DENIED

Denial of glaucoma surgery

Prison authorities refused to facilitate surgery for Ahmed's glaucoma, placing his vision at serious risk. He also suffers from diabetes and a herniated lumbar disc.

2024

REFERRAL TO TRIAL

Referral to criminal trial

The Supreme State Security Prosecution referred Ahmed and 29 other journalists and media workers to criminal trial in Case No. 977 of 2017 (Mekameleen 2).

April 2026

HEARING

Trial repeatedly postponed

His trial before the First Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court had been postponed several times, with a session set for 21 June 2026. He still needed glaucoma surgery.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi built his career in Egyptian print journalism, writing for Al-Tariq newspaper before moving into editorial leadership at Al-Diyar. His journalism focused on civil and political rights in a media environment increasingly constrained by state security priorities.

He became a member of the Journalists for Reform movement, which advocates for transparency and independence within Egypt's Press Syndicate. As a researcher at the Arab Observatory for Media Freedom, he documented violations against journalists, including arbitrary detention, censorship, and prosecutions under cybercrime and terrorism laws. His work defending detained colleagues made him a recognized figure in Egypt's shrinking press-freedom community.

Arrest and Detention

Ahmed has been arrested several times. He was arrested on 31 January 2015 and released on bail in June 2015. On 21 December 2017 he was arrested again and, after more than 40 days of enforced disappearance, appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution in Case No. 977 of 2017, a sprawling investigation known in Egyptian media as "Mekameleen 2." The case has been used to prosecute dozens of journalists, activists, and opposition figures under charges related to national security and membership in banned organizations.

He was freed on 27 January 2020. On 24 March 2020 security forces raided his home in Kafr El-Sheikh and arrested him again, and he was charged in State Security Case No. 621 of 2018 with spreading false news and participating in a terrorist group. He was first sent to Tora prison; his current prison is not publicly confirmed. Pre-trial detention in Egypt can be extended indefinitely through renewable fifteen-day or forty-five-day orders, and on 22 December 2024 prosecutors referred the Mekameleen 2 case to trial.

Health and Denial of Medical Care

Ahmed suffers from glaucoma, a progressive eye disease that can lead to irreversible blindness without treatment. He requires surgery to manage the condition, but prison authorities have refused to facilitate the procedure or provide adequate medical care. The denial of treatment places his vision at serious risk.

He also lives with diabetes and a herniated disc in his lumbar spine, both of which require ongoing medical management. These conditions have deteriorated during his prolonged detention under poor prison conditions.

Legal Proceedings

On 22 December 2024, the Egyptian Supreme State Security Prosecution referred Ahmed and 29 other journalists and media workers to criminal trial in Case No. 977 of 2017, on charges of membership in the Muslim Brotherhood and producing and spreading misleading media content for channels such as Mekameleen. By April 2026 the trial before the First Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court had been postponed several times, with a session set for 21 June 2026.

State Security Prosecution cases in Egypt are characterized by prolonged pre-trial detention, restrictions on lawyer access, and trials before Emergency State Security Courts or ordinary criminal courts under emergency procedures. Defendants in such cases are often held for years before trial.

International and Domestic Concern

Ahmed's case exemplifies the use of prolonged pre-trial detention as a form of punishment without conviction. His detention has drawn attention from press-freedom organizations, which view it as part of a broader campaign to silence independent journalism and human rights documentation in Egypt. His deteriorating health and the denial of necessary medical treatment have heightened concerns for his safety.

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SAMPLE LETTER

Copy it, adapt it and send it from your own address.

Your Excellency,

I am writing to demand the immediate release of Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi, journalist and trade unionist; researcher at the Arab Observatory for Media Freedom; former managing editor of Al-Diyar newspaper; advocate for detained journalists, currently detained in Egypt since 24 March 2020, and an end to all reprisals tied to this case.

In brief: Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi is a journalist, trade unionist, and researcher at the Arab Observatory for Media Freedom who has spent years defending the rights of detained colleagues. He has been detained almost without a break since December 2017 and is now on trial in the Mekameleen 2 case.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Release Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi immediately and unconditionally;
2. Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights;
3. Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention;
4. Provide Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi with immediate, independent medical evaluation and the full treatment that condition requires, including transfer to an independent civilian hospital if necessary.

I will continue to monitor this case until Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi is free.

Respectfully,

[Your name]
[Your city, country]
8 November 2026