

Advocacy dossier

Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi

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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.

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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	Arrested	Country
Detained (pretrial)	**24 Mar 2020**	**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

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

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.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

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

03

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.

2 February 2021

Conviction

Military court sentences him to 10 years

He was sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges of publishing messages giving the locations of security forces' ambushes and of creating a page to organise media campaigns against the presidency.

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.

December 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).

23 September 2025

Hearing postponed

Mekameleen 2 trial adjourned to 7 December 2025

At the second session of the trial of 29 journalists and media workers in the Mekameleen 2 case, the First Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court, sitting at Badr, adjourned the case to 7 December 2025 for the defence to review the file and for prosecution witnesses to be heard.

7 December 2025

Hearing postponed

Trial adjourned to 2 February 2026

At the third session in Case No. 977 of 2017, the First Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court adjourned the trial to 2 February 2026 to summon the prosecution witnesses.

04

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: This record was checked against current sources. Ahmed Hamdy Abou Zeid Al-Tanoubi remains in pretrial detention and on trial with 29 journalists and media workers in the Mekameleen 2 case (No. 977 of 2017) before the First Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court; the last reported session, on 7 December 2025, was adjourned to 2 February 2026 to hear witnesses, and no verdict has been reported.

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. On 2 February 2021 he was sentenced to 10 years in prison, reportedly by a military court, in a case over messages about security forces' positions. 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. At its second session, on 23 September 2025, the First Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court, sitting at Badr, adjourned the trial to 7 December 2025, when it was adjourned again to 2 February 2026 to hear prosecution witnesses. No verdict has been reported.

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.

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

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