

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

AMAL FATHY

أمل فتحي

At liberty **Egypt**

Women's rights defender sentenced to prison for criticising Egypt's failure to protect women from sexual harassment. Convicted on false-news and insult charges after posting a Facebook video; all precautionary measures in a parallel terrorism case were lifted in March 2020.

HuMENA.

Prepared by HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement · 8 November 2026

Case reference HM-EG-2026-043

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Women's rights defender sentenced to prison for criticising Egypt's failure to protect women from sexual harassment. Convicted on false-news and insult charges after posting a Facebook video; all precautionary measures in a parallel terrorism case were lifted in March 2020.

STATUS	**At liberty**
ARRESTED	**11 May 2018**
COUNTRY	**Egypt**
SENTENCE	**One year in prison including time served (Case No. 7991 of 2018, reduced by the Court of Cassation on 11 January 2022; final). Case No. 621 of 2018 on terrorism charges has not been reported closed; all precautionary measures in it were lifted in March 2020.**
CHARGES	**Publication of false news undermining national security** **Publishing material that insults public decency** **Publicly insulting the State** **Joining a terrorist group** **Publishing false news to disrupt public security and harm national interests** **Using the internet to call for acts of terrorism**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Immediately end all harassment, summons, surveillance, and threats against the family of Amal Fathy in Egypt.

02 Cease the use of family members as leverage to pressure Amal Fathy into silence.

03 Drop any fabricated charges against family members and unblock their travel, financial, and professional rights.

04 Comply with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which explicitly prohibits reprisals against the families of defenders.

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

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DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Arbitrary detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9
Criminalisation of solidarity	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 21, 22 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 5
Defamation and smear campaign	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 17 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12
Judicial harassment	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12
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)
Reprisal against relatives	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12
Unfair trial	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

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HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

9 May 2018

DEFENDER ACTIVITY

Facebook video posted

Amal Fathy posted a video on Facebook criticising the Egyptian government's failure to protect women from sexual harassment and describing deteriorating living conditions.

11 May 2018

ARREST

Arrest and pre-trial detention

Security forces arrested Amal Fathy at home, together with her husband Mohamed Lotfy and their son, who were released hours later. She was placed in pre-trial detention. Authorities opened two criminal cases against her: Case No. 7991 of 2018 for false news and insult charges, and Case No. 621 of 2018 for terrorism-related charges.

13 May 2018

PRETRIAL DETENTION RENEWED

Detention ordered in terrorism case

The Supreme State Security Prosecution ordered her detention in Case No. 621 of 2018 on terrorism charges.

19 June 2018

CONTEXT

Release on bail ordered, then blocked

An appeals court in Helwan ordered her release on bail. The prosecution appealed and she remained in detention.

29 September 2018

CONVICTION

Two-year sentence in Case No. 7991

The Maadi Misdemeanour Court sentenced Amal Fathy to two years in prison and a fine of 10,000 Egyptian pounds for publishing false news, publishing material that insults public decency, and insulting the State.

30 September 2018

APPEAL LODGED

Appeal filed and bail paid

Amal Fathy appealed the verdict and paid bail of 20,000 Egyptian pounds, but remained in detention under the parallel terrorism case (Case No. 621 of 2018).

27 December 2018

CONDITIONAL RELEASE

Conditional release in Case No. 621

Amal Fathy was conditionally released under Case No. 621 of 2018, though terrorism charges including joining a terrorist group and using the internet to call for terrorism remained pending.

30 December 2018

APPEAL: JUDGMENT UPHELD

Appeal rejected, sentence confirmed

The Cairo Court of Appeal rejected Amal Fathy's appeal in Case No. 7991 and confirmed the two-year prison sentence.

10 February 2019

CONTEXT

Probation measures eased

Her probation measures were eased to allow medical visits. She still had to report to the police twice a week.

14 March 2020

CONTEXT

All precautionary measures lifted

The Supreme State Security Prosecution lifted all precautionary measures imposed on her in Case No. 621 of 2018. The case itself has not been reported closed.

11 January 2022

FINAL JUDGMENT

Court of Cassation makes the conviction final

The Court of Cassation upheld Amal Fathy's conviction in Case No. 7991 of 2018 but reduced the sentence to one year in prison including time served. The judgment is final.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Amal Fathy is a women's rights defender who became known for publicly confronting sexual harassment and criticising the Egyptian government's failure to address violence against women. She also spoke openly about the deteriorating economic and social conditions facing ordinary Egyptians and the widespread arbitrary detention of activists and critics. Her advocacy placed her in direct conflict with state authorities who have criminalised dissent under anti-terrorism and false-news statutes.

Fathy is married to Mohamed Lotfy, Executive Director of the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, an organisation that documents enforced disappearances, torture in detention, and other grave violations. ECRF staff and their families have faced sustained judicial harassment and surveillance in retaliation for their work, particularly their documentation in high-profile cases including the 2016 torture and murder of Italian researcher Giulio Regeni.

The Arrest

On 9 May 2018, Amal Fathy posted a video to her Facebook account. In it, she criticised the Egyptian government for failing to protect women from sexual harassment and spoke about the general decline in living conditions. Two days later, on 11 May 2018, security forces arrested her and placed her in pre-trial detention.

Authorities opened two separate criminal cases against her. The first, Case No. 7991 of 2018, charged her with "publication of false news undermining national security," "publishing material that insults public decency," and "publicly insulting the State", all related to the Facebook video. The second, Case No. 621 of 2018, brought far graver charges: "joining a terrorist group," "publishing false news to disrupt public security and harm national interests," and "using the internet to call for acts of terrorism." Prosecutors in the second case cited her suspected links to the April 6 Youth Movement and her husband's human rights activities as grounds for the terrorism charges.

Legal Proceedings

On 29 September 2018, the Maadi Misdemeanour Court sentenced Amal Fathy to two years in prison and imposed a fine of 10,000 Egyptian pounds under Case No. 7991. The court allowed her to suspend the sentence by posting bail of 20,000 pounds. She appealed the verdict the following day and paid the bail, but remained in detention under the parallel terrorism case.

On 27 December 2018, authorities conditionally released Fathy in Case No. 621. Three days later, on 30 December 2018, the Cairo Court of Appeal rejected her appeal in the first case and confirmed the two-year prison sentence. The parallel terrorism charges in Case No. 621 remained open and unresolved.

On 11 January 2022, the Egyptian Court of Cassation upheld her conviction in Case No. 7991, reducing the sentence to one year including time served. Case No. 621 has not been reported closed, although the Supreme State Security Prosecution lifted all precautionary measures against her in it on 14 March 2020.

Context and Pattern of Repression

The dual-case strategy used against Amal Fathy is part of a broader pattern of judicial harassment targeting Egyptian human rights defenders. Authorities layer criminal cases to extend pre-trial detention indefinitely, recycle charges when one case nears conclusion, and use terrorism accusations to justify long sentences and denial of bail. The Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms and its staff have been particularly targeted for their documentation of torture, enforced disappearances, and killings in custody.

Fathy's prosecution illustrates how speech crimes and terrorism charges are combined to silence critics. The Facebook video that triggered her arrest contained no incitement to violence; it addressed sexual harassment and economic hardship. Yet prosecutors invoked national security and terrorism statutes to justify her detention and conviction. The case underscores the shrinking space for women's rights advocacy and the criminalisation of even mild public criticism in Egypt.

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SAMPLE LETTER

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

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express grave concern about the campaign of reprisals targeting the family of human rights defender Amal Fathy, women's rights defender and advocate against sexual harassment; outspoken critic of arbitrary detention and government repression. Punishing relatives for the peaceful work of a defender is collective punishment and a violation of international law.

In brief: Women's rights defender sentenced to prison for criticising Egypt's failure to protect women from sexual harassment. Convicted on false-news and insult charges after posting a Facebook video; all precautionary measures in a parallel terrorism case were lifted in March 2020.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Immediately end all harassment, summons, surveillance, and threats against the family of Amal Fathy in Egypt;
2. Cease the use of family members as leverage to pressure Amal Fathy into silence;
3. Drop any fabricated charges against family members and unblock their travel, financial, and professional rights;
4. Comply with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, which explicitly prohibits reprisals against the families of defenders.

I will continue to monitor the welfare of Amal Fathy's family in Egypt and will publicly raise concerns at every level until the reprisals stop.

Respectfully,

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