

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

HOSSAMELDIN ALI

حسام الدين علي

At liberty **Egypt**

President of the Egyptian Democratic Academy, which promotes democracy and political participation, Hossameldin Ali faced travel bans, asset freezes, and questioning in the 2011 foreign funding case before charges were dropped in August 2021.

HuMENA.

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

Case reference HM-EG-2026-031

01

THE CASE AT A GLANCE

President of the Egyptian Democratic Academy, which promotes democracy and political participation, Hossameldin Ali faced travel bans, asset freezes, and questioning in the 2011 foreign funding case before charges were dropped in August 2021.

STATUS	**At liberty**
COUNTRY	**Egypt**
SENTENCE	**Case dropped: the investigative judge found no grounds to proceed in case 173 of 2011 (30 August 2021).**
CHARGES	**Unlawfully receiving foreign funding in violation of Egypt's NGO laws** **Harming national security** **Running a branch of an international organisation without a licence**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Immediately lift the travel ban imposed on Hossameldin Ali and on any family members affected by the same order.

02 Restore valid travel documents and remove any border-watch flags placed in connection with peaceful human rights work.

03 Comply with the ICCPR Article 12 guarantee of freedom of movement.

04 Immediately unfreeze the personal and organisational accounts of Hossameldin Ali.

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

02

DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Arbitrary detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9
Asset freeze	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 13
Judicial harassment	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12
Travel ban	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12

03

HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

2011

INVESTIGATION OPENED

Foreign funding investigation opened

Egyptian authorities opened case 173 of 2011, the so-called foreign funding investigation targeting civil-society organisations, including the Egyptian Democratic Academy.

December 2014

TRAVEL BAN IMPOSED

First travel ban imposed

The Public Prosecutor banned Hossameldin Ali from travel pending the case 173 investigation.

27 February 2016

TRAVEL BAN IMPOSED

Travel ban enforced at airport

Ali was prevented from traveling to the United States at Cairo International Airport and subjected to a three-hour telephone interrogation by a National Security officer.

20 May 2018

RELEASE ON BAIL ORDERED

Questioned and released on bail

The investigative judge in case 173 questioned him and ordered his release on bail of 20,000 Egyptian pounds the same day. His lawyer said police kept holding him after the bail was paid.

30 August 2021

CASE UPDATE

Case dropped, charges dismissed

The investigative judge authorised by the Cairo Court of Appeal decided there were no grounds to proceed in case 173 against Ali, his organisation and three co-defendants.

04

THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Hossameldin Ali founded and led the Egyptian Democratic Academy, a non-profit organisation established by a group of activists to promote democracy, human rights, and political participation in Egypt. The Academy provided training, facilitated civic engagement, and worked to strengthen democratic culture in a political environment that grew increasingly hostile to independent civil society after 2011.

Ali worked alongside a board of directors that included other prominent defenders. The Academy operated in the same ecosystem as organisations led by Azza Soliman, Negad El Borei, and Magdi Abdel Hameed, all of whom would later be co-defendants in the same case.

The Foreign Funding Investigation

In 2011, Egyptian authorities opened case 173, an investigation targeting civil-society organisations that received foreign funding. The case became a tool for criminalising independent advocacy groups, accusing them of breaching restrictive laws governing non-governmental organisations. Hossameldin Ali and the Egyptian Democratic Academy were swept into the investigation.

In December 2014, authorities imposed a travel ban on Ali in connection with the ongoing investigation. The ban was ordered by the Public Prosecutor and later upheld by a criminal court. It was one of many such bans imposed on civil-society leaders during this period.

Travel Ban and Interrogation

On 27 February 2016, Ali arrived at Cairo International Airport to fly to the United States. He had been invited to attend an international conference on combating corruption through legislation, organised by the U.S. State Department. Airport authorities informed him that he remained under a travel ban and would not be permitted to board.

A National Security officer then interrogated him by telephone for three hours. The officer questioned him about the Egyptian Democratic Academy's funding sources, its activities, his role on the board, the details and purpose of his U.S. trip, and the identities of people he intended to meet. The interrogation was conducted without legal counsel present and without any formal charge or hearing.

The travel ban extended to other Academy members. Ahmed Ghonim and Bassem Samir, both board members, were also barred from leaving Egypt. The pattern reflected a broader campaign against civil-society organisations, including bans imposed on defenders such as Esraa Abdel Fattah.

Questioning and Release on Bail

On 20 May 2018, the investigative judge handling case 173 questioned Hossameldin Ali and ordered his release on bail of 20,000 Egyptian pounds the same day. His lawyer said police kept holding him after the bail was paid.

Case Dropped

On 30 August 2021, the investigative judge authorised by the Cairo Court of Appeal to examine case 173 decided to drop the case against Hossameldin Ali, his organisation, and three co-defendants: Azza Soliman, Negad El Borei, and Magdi Abdel Hameed. The decision closed the case against them without a trial.

The ruling, however, did not automatically lift the travel bans or asset freezes imposed on Ali and his organisation. Those measures required separate administrative and legal procedures. As of the case closure, both restrictions remained in force, preventing Ali from traveling abroad and freezing the Academy's assets and his personal finances.

Impact and Context

Hossameldin Ali's case exemplifies the use of prolonged investigations, asset freezes, and travel bans to restrict civil-society work in Egypt. Even after the case was dropped, the administrative penalties continued to constrain his freedom of movement and the Academy's operations. The foreign funding case targeted more than 40 organisations and numerous individuals, most of whom faced years of uncertainty, frozen assets, and curtailed movement before charges were dropped or dismissed.

05

SAMPLE LETTER

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

Your Excellency,

I am writing to demand the immediate lifting of the arbitrary travel ban imposed on Hossameldin Ali, human rights defender and president of the Egyptian Democratic Academy, promoting democracy, human rights, and political participation in Egypt.

In brief: President of the Egyptian Democratic Academy, which promotes democracy and political participation, Hossameldin Ali faced travel bans, asset freezes, and questioning in the 2011 foreign funding case before charges were dropped in August 2021.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Immediately lift the travel ban imposed on Hossameldin Ali and on any family members affected by the same order;
2. Restore valid travel documents and remove any border-watch flags placed in connection with peaceful human rights work;
3. Comply with the ICCPR Article 12 guarantee of freedom of movement;
4. Immediately unfreeze the personal and organisational accounts of Hossameldin Ali.

I will continue to monitor this case until Hossameldin Ali's freedom of movement is restored.

Respectfully,

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