

Advocacy dossier

Ismail Alexandrani

إسماعيل الإسكندراني

Detained (pretrial) **Egypt**

Ismail Alexandrani is an Egyptian researcher and journalist known for his work on Sinai who served a military court sentence from 2015 to 2022 and was arrested again on 24 September 2025 over Facebook posts. He remains in pretrial detention on terrorism and false news charges in Case No. 6469 of 2025 and, according to his lawyer, was moved at the end of September 2026 to Wadi al-Natrun prison during protests over prolonged pretrial detention.

01
The case at a glance

Ismail Alexandrani is an Egyptian researcher and journalist known for his work on Sinai who served a military court sentence from 2015 to 2022 and was arrested again on 24 September 2025 over Facebook posts. He remains in pretrial detention on terrorism and false news charges in Case No. 6469 of 2025 and, according to his lawyer, was moved at the end of September 2026 to Wadi al-Natrun prison during protests over prolonged pretrial detention.

Status **Detained (pretrial)**	Arrested **24 Sep 2025**	Country **Egypt**

Sentence No sentence in the current case. In the earlier case a military court sentenced him on 22 May 2018 to 10 years; the Military Court of Cassation reduced it to seven years in October 2022, and he was released on 5 December 2022.

Charges Joining a terrorist group
Spreading false news and rumours
Using a website to promote terrorist ideas

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Release Ismail Alexandrani 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.

02

How the case unfolded

29 November 2015

Arrest

Arrested at Hurghada airport on arrival from Berlin

Ismail Alexandrani was detained at Hurghada airport on arrival from Berlin and questioned by national security agents before being transferred to Cairo. Prosecutors ordered 15 days of pretrial detention on charges that included publishing false news and belonging to a banned group.

December 2017

Other act

Case transferred to the military prosecution

After more than two years in pretrial detention, his case was referred to the military prosecution.

22 May 2018

Conviction

Sentenced by a military court to 10 years in prison

A military court in Cairo sentenced him to 10 years in prison on charges of membership of a banned organisation and spreading false news. CPJ also reports convictions for obtaining and publishing military secrets.

October 2022

Appeal: sentence reduced

Military Court of Cassation reduces his sentence to seven years

The Military Court of Cassation reduced his 10-year sentence to seven years.

5 December 2022

Release

Released after serving his reduced sentence

He was released after serving the seven-year sentence in full. He was moved from Badr prison to Alexandria and held briefly at Montazah 2 police station before release.

September 2025

Pretrial detention ordered

Ordered detained for 15 days on terrorism and false news charges

Prosecutors charged him in Case No. 6469 of 2025 with joining a terrorist group, spreading false news and using a website to promote terrorist ideas, and ordered him held for 15 days pending investigation. His lawyers were not allowed to read the investigation file.

24 September 2025

Re-arrest

Re-arrested at a checkpoint in Matrouh

He posted on Facebook that he had been stopped at a checkpoint near Marsa Matrouh on his way back from Siwa. According to his lawyer Mahienour El-Masry, a National Security Agency officer seized his phone, blindfolded him and took him to an unknown location for several hours before he was brought to the Supreme State Security Prosecution in Cairo, which questioned him about 17 Facebook posts.

5 October 2025

Pretrial detention renewed

Detention extended by 15 days

A Supreme State Security prosecutor renewed his detention for 15 days by video conference. He had been transferred to the 10th of Ramadan prison complex in al-Sharqia governorate. His lawyers said he has diabetes and breathing difficulties and needs a medical device while sleeping, part of which was missing after National Security Agency officers confiscated it.

November 2025

Pretrial detention renewed

Detention renewed in Case No. 6469 of 2025

The Supreme State Security Prosecution renewed his detention for a further 15 days pending investigation in Case No. 6469 of 2025.

8 June 2026

Pretrial detention renewed

Detention renewed for 45 days; referral to a surgical consultant granted

The council chamber sitting at the Badr prison court complex renewed his detention for 45 days in Case No. 6469 of 2025. According to his lawyer Khaled Ali, it also granted the defence's request that he be examined by a surgical consultant.

28 July 2026

Other act

UN special procedures raise his case with Egypt

UN special procedures mandate holders sent a communication to the Egyptian government (reference EGY 5/2026) concerning his arrest, detention and prosecution on terrorism charges reportedly stemming from his peaceful expression of opinion, and raising concerns about arbitrary detention and denial of legal safeguards. The government's reply is listed as dated 24 September 2026; its content was not reviewed.

September 2026

Punitive transfer

Transferred to a distant prison during protests over prolonged pretrial detention

At the end of September 2026 he was transferred from the 10th of Ramadan prison to Wadi al-Natrun prison, his lawyer Mahienour El-Masry told Mada Masr. His family filed a request with the Public Prosecutor on 1 October 2026 to learn where he was held and to seek an investigation into reports that detainees had been moved with violence. On 9 October 2026, EIPR and nine other groups named him among detainees moved to distant prisons after protests and said such transfers may be used to punish protesters. He remains in pretrial detention.

6 September 2026

Pretrial detention renewed

Criminal court renews his detention for 45 days in his absence

The criminal court renewed his pretrial detention for 45 days. He was not present; prison guards reportedly told the court he had refused to attend.

03

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: Ismail Alexandrani remains in pretrial detention in Case No. 6469 of 2025, more than a year after his arrest at a checkpoint in Matrouh. His lawyer reports that he was moved at the end of September 2026 from the 10th of Ramadan prison to Wadi al-Natrun prison during protests over prolonged pretrial detention; no later renewal decision has been confirmed by a trusted source.

Background and Work

Ismail Alexandrani is an Egyptian writer, investigative journalist and researcher best known for his work on armed groups and state policy in the Sinai Peninsula. He has worked with research centres including the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights and the Arab Reform Initiative, and his writing has appeared in Assafir, Al-Modon and Jadaliyya, according to PEN International. He was the 2015 Visiting Arab Journalist Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. CPJ describes him as a freelance journalist who writes for Al Manassa and Al-Safir Al-Arabi, with more than 82,000 followers on Facebook.

The Arrest

He was first arrested on 29 November 2015 at Hurghada airport on his return from Berlin, questioned by national security agents and transferred to Cairo, where prosecutors ordered his pretrial detention on charges that included publishing false news and belonging to a banned group. ECRF reports that a criminal court ordered his release after a year of pretrial detention but that the prosecution appealed and he stayed in custody. In December 2017, after more than two years in pretrial detention, his case was referred to the military judiciary.

After his release in December 2022 he resumed research and writing. On 24 September 2025, two days after President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi pardoned the activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, he posted on Facebook that he had been stopped at a checkpoint near Marsa Matrouh on his way back from Siwa. According to his lawyer Mahienour El-Masry, a National Security Agency officer seized his phone, blindfolded him and held him at an unknown location for several hours. Hossam Bahgat, director of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, confirmed that he had then appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution.

Detention Conditions and Health

During his first imprisonment he was held at the Mazraa prison in the Tora complex, where, PEN International reports, he was denied in-person family visits and reading and writing materials. Since October 2025 his lawyers have said that he has diabetes and breathing difficulties and needs a medical device while sleeping, part of which went missing after National Security Agency officers confiscated it. He was held at the 10th of Ramadan prison complex in al-Sharqia. In June 2026 the court granted a defence request that he be examined by a surgical consultant. At the end of September 2026 he was transferred to Wadi al-Natrun prison; his family asked the Public Prosecutor on 1 October 2026 to disclose his whereabouts and investigate reports that detainees

were moved with violence. A non-listed outlet, fakartany, reported that his brother Mohamed said he had been barred from visits and deprived of his medicines, clothes and blankets.

Legal Proceedings

On 22 May 2018 a military court sentenced him to 10 years in prison on charges including membership of a banned group, spreading false news and, according to CPJ, obtaining and publishing military secrets. In October 2022 the Military Court of Cassation reduced the sentence to seven years, and he was released on 5 December 2022 after being held briefly at Montazah 2 police station in Alexandria.

In the current case, No. 6469 of 2025, the Supreme State Security Prosecution questioned him about 17 Facebook posts, including posts criticising the practice of holding critics in successive cases and opposing the arrest of the Sinai activist Said Eteik, who is held in the same case. He was charged with joining a terrorist group, spreading false news and using a website to promote terrorist ideas, and his lawyers were not allowed to read the file. His detention was renewed every 15 days by the prosecution, including by video conference on 5 October 2025, and later every 45 days by the courts: on 8 June 2026 by the council chamber at the Badr prison court complex, and on 6 September 2026 by the criminal court, in his absence. His lawyers include Khaled Ali and Mahienour El-Masry.

International Response

Human Rights Watch reviewed the posts at issue and found them to be protected peaceful speech; it called for his immediate and unconditional release. CPJ, PEN International and Amnesty International have campaigned on his case since 2015. On 28 July 2026 UN special procedures mandate holders sent a communication to the Egyptian government (EGY 5/2026) about his arrest, detention and prosecution; the government's reply is listed as dated 24 September 2026. On 9 October 2026 EIPR and nine other organisations named him among detainees transferred to distant prisons after protests and called for an independent investigation.

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

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