

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

# MAHIENOUR EL-MASRY

ماهينور المصري

**At liberty** **Egypt**

Mahienour El-Masry is a lawyer who organizes protests and fundraises bail for political prisoners. Arrested outside the prosecutor's office in 2019, she spent 22 months in pretrial detention on accusations of joining an illegal organization.

HuMENA.

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

Case reference HM-EG-2026-032

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# THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Mahienour El-Masry is a lawyer who organizes protests and fundraises bail for political prisoners. Arrested outside the prosecutor's office in 2019, she spent 22 months in pretrial detention on accusations of joining an illegal organization.

| | |
|---|---|
| STATUS | **At liberty** |
| ARRESTED | **23 Apr 2024** |
| COUNTRY | **Egypt** |
| CHARGES | **Joining an illegal organization (Case No. 488 of 2019)**<br>**Joining an illegal organization (Case No. 855 of 2020)**<br>**Joining a group founded in violation of the law (Case No. 1567 of 2024)**<br>**Spreading false news (Case No. 6322 of 2025)** |

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

## WHAT WE ASK

01 Drop any charges that remain on record against Mahienour El-Masry in connection with peaceful human rights work.

02 Confirm publicly that Mahienour El-Masry faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case.

03 Guarantee that Mahienour El-Masry can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal.

04 Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

**Latest updates on this case**
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/mahienour-el-masry/

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# DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

| | INTERNATIONAL STANDARD |
|---|---|
| **Arbitrary detention** | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9 |
| **Denial of legal counsel** | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3) |
| **Enforced disappearance** | International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, Article 2<br>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 9, 16 |
| **Judicial harassment** | UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12 |
| **Prolonged pretrial detention** | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3) |

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# HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

**2014**

CONVICTION

### Sentenced under the protest law

She was sentenced to two years in prison and an EGP 50,000 fine under the protest law over a protest outside the retrial of the police officers accused of killing Khaled Said, and was imprisoned.

**20 July 2014**

APPEAL: SENTENCE REDUCED

### Sentence reduced to six months on appeal

The appeal court reduced her protest-law sentence to six months.

**21 September 2014**

RELEASE

### Released after the appeal court accepts her petition

She was released after the Alexandria appeal court accepted her petition.

**31 May 2015**

CONVICTION

### Sentenced to 15 months over the Raml police station case

The El Raml misdemeanour appeals court sentenced her to one year and three months in prison over a March 2013 visit to Raml police station, where she went with lawyers to assist detained activists. She was imprisoned.

**13 August 2016**

RELEASE

### Released after serving the 15-month sentence

She was released after serving her 15-month sentence.

**18 November 2017**

ARREST

### Detained over a Tiran and Sanafir protest

She was detained over a 2017 protest against the transfer of the Tiran and Sanafir islands to Saudi Arabia.

**30 December 2017**

CONVICTION

### Sentenced to two years

An Alexandria misdemeanour court sentenced her to two years in prison.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **13 January 2018** | ACQUITTAL | **Acquitted on appeal**<br>The Montazah misdemeanour appeals court acquitted her. |
| **16 January 2018** | RELEASE | **Released after acquittal**<br>She was released after her acquittal. |
| **22 September 2019** | ARREST | **Arrested outside State Prosecution Office**<br>Security forces arrested Mahienour El-Masry outside the State Prosecution Office in Cairo. No arrest warrant was presented, and her location remained unknown for a period following the arrest. |
| **23 September 2019** | HEARING | **Ordered into preventive detention**<br>The Supreme State Security Prosecution ordered fifteen days of preventive detention in Case No. 488 of 2019 on charges of joining an illegal organization. |
| **20 October 2019** | HEARING | **Detention renewed for 15 days**<br>The Supreme Public Prosecution renewed her preventive detention for an additional fifteen days. |
| **3 November 2019** | HEARING | **Detention renewed for 15 days**<br>The Supreme Public Prosecution renewed her preventive detention for fifteen additional days for investigation purposes. |
| **18 November 2019** | HEARING | **Detention renewed for 15 days**<br>The Supreme Public Prosecution renewed her preventive detention for another fifteen days for investigative purposes. |
| **11 February 2020** | HEARING | **Detention renewed for 45 days**<br>The Criminal Court of Cairo renewed her preventive detention for an additional forty-five days. |
| **5 May 2020** | HEARING | **Detention renewed for 45 days**<br>The Criminal Court of Cairo renewed her detention for another forty-five days, alongside human rights defenders Mohamed El-Baqer, Ibrahim Ezz El-Din, and Mohamed Ibrahim. |
| **30 August 2020** | HEARING | **Interrogated on second charge**<br>While the first case remained open, she was interrogated on a second accusation of joining an illegal organization in case No. 855 of 2020. |
| **31 August 2020** | HEARING | **Detention renewed for 15 days**<br>The Supreme Public Prosecution renewed her preventive detention for fifteen days following the second interrogation. |
| **18 July 2021** | CONDITIONAL RELEASE | **Released on bail**<br>After 22 months of arbitrary pretrial detention, El-Masry was provisionally released pending investigations into "false news" and terrorism-related allegations. |

**23 April 2024**

ARREST

### Arrested at a women's vigil for Gaza

Mahienour El-Masry was arrested with at least 16 others at a women's vigil for Gaza outside the UN Women regional office in Cairo. The Supreme State Security Prosecution charged them in Case No. 1567 of 2024 with joining a group founded in violation of the law.

**24 April 2024**

CONDITIONAL RELEASE

### Released on bail the next day

The Supreme State Security Prosecution released her and the other detainees on bail pending investigation.

**August 2025**

INTERROGATION

### Questioned in Case No. 6322 of 2025 and released on bail

After a summons on 14 August, the Supreme State Security Prosecution questioned her for more than six hours in Case No. 6322 of 2025 on false news charges based on complaints about her posts. She was released on EGP 50,000 bail.

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# THE FULL STORY

**Update, 13 May 2026:** El-Masry was provisionally released on 18 July 2021 after 22 months of arbitrary pretrial detention. She has since continued legal practice and human rights advocacy.

## Background and Work

Mahienour El-Masry is a human rights lawyer whose practice extended beyond the courtroom into the streets and the networks of families waiting for verdicts. She organized peaceful protests, coordinated social media campaigns, and built support systems for political prisoners, including fundraising for bail and hosting solidarity events. Her focus on judicial independence and prisoners' rights placed her at the center of Egypt's civil society resistance to mass detention and politicized prosecution.

By 2019 she was well known to the authorities, having been imprisoned three times between 2014 and 2018 over peaceful protests. Her visibility made her both effective and exposed.

## The Arrest

On 22 September 2019, Mahienour El-Masry was arrested by security forces outside the State Prosecution Office in Cairo. No arrest warrant was shown. Her location remained unknown for a period following the arrest, a common pattern in cases involving enforced disappearance before formal processing by prosecutors.

She was brought before the Supreme State Security Prosecution the following day, 23 September 2019, and ordered into fifteen days of preventive detention. The charge was joining an illegal organization, a standard accusation in national-security cases that allows for indefinite pretrial detention under Egyptian law.

## Prolonged Pretrial Detention

Mahienour El-Masry's detention was renewed repeatedly from September 2019 through mid-2020. The Supreme Public Prosecution extended her detention on 20 October 2019, 3 November 2019, and 18 November 2019, each time for fifteen additional days and each time citing the need for further investigation. By February 2020 the intervals had lengthened: the Criminal Court of Cairo renewed her detention on 11 February for forty-five days, and again on 5 May for another forty-five days.

The cycle of renewals continued without trial. During this period she remained in pretrial detention alongside other human rights defenders, including lawyers Mohamed El-Baqer and Ibrahim Ezz El-Din.

## Second Accusation and Interrogation

On 30 August 2020, while still detained in the first case, Mahienour El-Masry was interrogated by the Public Prosecution Office on a second accusation of joining an illegal organization, this time in a newly opened case numbered 855 of 2020. The next day, 31 August, prosecutors renewed her preventive

detention for another fifteen days.

The addition of a second case on an identical charge is a tactic documented in numerous Egyptian cases involving human rights defenders, used to extend detention beyond statutory limits or to hedge against the possibility of release in the first proceeding.

## Release on Bail

On 18 July 2021, the Public Prosecution Office ordered Mahienour El-Masry's release on bail. She had been held in pretrial detention since September 2019. The release did not constitute acquittal or dismissal of charges. Both cases against her remain open, and the terms of her bail leave her vulnerable to rearrest and further prosecution.

On 23 April 2024 she was arrested at a women's vigil for Gaza in Cairo and released on bail the next day in Case No. 1567 of 2024. In August 2025 she was questioned in Case No. 6322 of 2025 on false news charges and released on EGP 50,000 bail.

## International Response

Front Line Defenders and other international human rights organizations documented her case throughout her detention, highlighting the arbitrary nature of her arrest and the prolonged pretrial detention as violations of due process. Her case has been cited as emblematic of the systematic use of national-security charges to silence lawyers and activists who defend political detainees in Egypt.

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# SAMPLE LETTER

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

Your Excellency,

I am writing about the case of Mahienour El-Masry, human rights lawyer; advocate for judicial independence, prisoners' rights, and political detainees through protests, social media, and solidarity campaigns in Egypt, who has been released. I am writing to ask that the case be closed properly and that no further reprisal follows.

In brief: Mahienour El-Masry is a lawyer who organizes protests and fundraises bail for political prisoners. Arrested outside the prosecutor's office in 2019, she spent 22 months in pretrial detention on accusations of joining an illegal organization.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Drop any charges that remain on record against Mahienour El-Masry in connection with peaceful human rights work;
2. Confirm publicly that Mahienour El-Masry faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case;
3. Guarantee that Mahienour El-Masry can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal;
4. Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

I will continue to follow this case until the record against Mahienour El-Masry is cleared and no reprisal remains.

Respectfully,

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