ADVOCACY DOSSIER

EL-SAYED SAEED AHMED MOHAMED KHALAF

السيد سعيد أحمد محمد خلف

Detained (pretrial) **Egypt**

Sayed Said Khalaf defended families of detainees and advocated for elderly and sick prisoners. He has been held since September 2020. A court ordered his release in March 2021, but he was disappeared and placed in a new case, for which he has been on trial before a terrorism circuit since 2025.

HuMENA.

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Case reference HM-EG-2020-004

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Sayed Said Khalaf defended families of detainees and advocated for elderly and sick prisoners. He has been held since September 2020. A court ordered his release in March 2021, but he was disappeared and placed in a new case, for which he has been on trial before a terrorism circuit since 2025.

STATUS	**Detained (pretrial)**
ARRESTED	**22 Sep 2020**
COUNTRY	**Egypt**
CHARGES	**Joining, reviving and financing a terrorist group (case 2468 of 2020)** **Joining a terrorist group knowing its aims and distributing leaflets (case 238 of 2021)**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Release Sayed Said Khalaf 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 Immediately unfreeze the personal and organisational accounts of Sayed Said Khalaf.

Latest updates on this case
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/sayed-said-khalaf/

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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
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 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)
Torture	Convention against Torture, Articles 1, 2 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 7
Unfair trial	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

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HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

22 September 2020

ARREST

Arrested and forcibly disappeared

Sayed Said Khalaf was arrested on his way home in Sharqiya and subsequently subjected to enforced disappearance. He was held in case 2468 of 2020 on charges of joining, reviving and financing a terrorist group.

October 2020

REAPPEARANCE IN CUSTODY

Reappearance before prosecutor

Khalaf reappeared before prosecutors and was charged in case number 2468 of 2020.

27 March 2021

RELEASE ORDER

Court orders his release

The Zagazig Criminal Court ordered his release, and the prosecution's appeal against the order was rejected the next day. He was not freed.

8 April 2021

ACQUITTAL

Acquitted in three protest cases

He was acquitted in three other cases related to protests.

12 May 2021

REAPPEARANCE IN CUSTODY

Appears before State Security Prosecution in a new case

After his release procedures he was forcibly disappeared, then appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution as a defendant in case 238 of 2021, accused of joining a terrorist group and distributing leaflets.

24 April 2024

HEARING

Detention renewed for 45 days

His pretrial detention was renewed for another 45 days, continuing the cycle of indefinite custody without trial.

August 2025

REFERRAL TO TRIAL

Referred to trial before a terrorism circuit

Case 238 of 2021, registered as 18599 of 2024 Nasr City First criminal, was before the Second Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court, sitting at Badr prison.

November 2025

HEARING

Trial session postponed to January 2026

The court postponed the session to 24 January 2026 for the defence to review the case file.

1 October 2026

HEARING

Trial postponed to 26 December 2026

The court postponed the trial in case 238 of 2021 to 26 December 2026 to join the case exhibits.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Sayed Said Khalaf, born in 1977, practiced as a member of the Egyptian Bar Association with a focus on politically sensitive cases. His work centered on defending individuals detained under national security pretexts, many of whom were held without charge or trial for years. He provided legal support to families navigating Egypt's opaque detention system, helping them locate disappeared relatives and challenge arbitrary renewals of pretrial custody.

In Sharqiya, a governorate northeast of Cairo, Khalaf became known for his advocacy on behalf of elderly and sick prisoners. He documented human rights violations in detention facilities and used legal channels to press for medical care and conditional release. His work brought him into regular conflict with security services, who viewed his documentation efforts as interference.

The Arrest

Khalaf was arrested on 22 September 2020. Following his detention, he was subjected to enforced disappearance, held incommunicado in a location outside judicial oversight. During this period he was tortured, both physically and psychologically. Interrogators made clear that the abuse was intended to force him to stop providing legal support to families of detainees.

When he eventually reappeared before prosecutors, he faced charges in case number 2468 of 2020. On 27 March 2021 the Zagazig Criminal Court ordered his release, and in April 2021 he was acquitted in three other cases. Instead of being freed, he was disappeared again and in May 2021 appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution in case number 238 of 2021. Both cases accuse him of joining a terrorist group; the charges appear designed to keep him in indefinite pretrial detention rather than to prepare for trial.

Detention Conditions and Legal Proceedings

Khalaf has been held in Badr 1 Prison in Badr City, a facility located in the desert east of Cairo. Pretrial detention orders have been renewed repeatedly, including on 24 April 2024, extending his custody for another 45 days. Under Egyptian law, pretrial detention can be renewed indefinitely, and in practice prosecutors use this mechanism to hold individuals for years without trial.

In 2025 case 238 of 2021 went to trial before the Second Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court, sitting at Badr, and sessions continued in 2026 without a verdict. The prolonged custody, the use of torture during enforced disappearance, and the recycling into a new case all point to judicial harassment designed to punish him for his human rights work rather than to prosecute any genuine criminal offense.

International and Domestic Response

Khalaf's detention is part of a broader campaign against lawyers in Egypt who represent political detainees or document state abuses. The Egyptian Bar Association has been unable or unwilling to provide effective protection for its members targeted by security agencies. Human rights organizations have documented his case as emblematic of the systematic repression faced by legal professionals who challenge state practices in court.

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SAMPLE LETTER

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

Your Excellency,

I am writing to demand the immediate release of Sayed Said Khalaf, lawyer; defended political detainees and documented human rights violations in Sharqiya governorate, currently detained in Egypt, and an end to all reprisals tied to this case.

In brief: Sayed Said Khalaf defended families of detainees and advocated for elderly and sick prisoners. He has been held since September 2020. A court ordered his release in March 2021, but he was disappeared and placed in a new case, for which he has been on trial before a terrorism circuit since 2025.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Release Sayed Said Khalaf immediately and unconditionally;
2. Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights;
3. Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention;
4. Immediately unfreeze the personal and organisational accounts of Sayed Said Khalaf.

I will continue to monitor this case until Sayed Said Khalaf is free.

Respectfully,

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