Advocacy dossier

Tawfiq Abdel-Wahid Ibrahim Ghanem

توفيق عبد الواحد إبراهيم غانم

Detained (pretrial) **Egypt**

Tawfiq Ghanem is a retired Egyptian journalist, a former regional director of Anadolu Agency in Cairo and former editor in chief of IslamOnline. Arrested in May 2021 and held in pretrial detention since then on terrorism-related charges, he is now on trial.

01
The case at a glance

Tawfiq Ghanem is a retired Egyptian journalist, a former regional director of Anadolu Agency in Cairo and former editor in chief of IslamOnline. Arrested in May 2021 and held in pretrial detention since then on terrorism-related charges, he is now on trial.

Status **Detained (pretrial)**	Arrested **21 May 2021**	Country **Egypt**

Charges
Joining a terrorist organization
Spreading false news
Misusing social media platforms

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Release Tawfiq Ghanem 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 Provide Tawfiq Ghanem with immediate, independent medical evaluation and the full treatment that condition requires, including transfer to an independent civilian hospital if necessary.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

Arbitrary detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9

Denial of medical care UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules), Rules 24 to 27

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

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)

Unfair trial International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

03

How the case unfolded

21 May 2021

Arrest

Arrested at his home in Giza

State Security officers arrested Tawfiq Ghanem at his home in Giza, confiscated his laptop and took him to an unknown place, where he was questioned without a lawyer about his past work at Anadolu Agency.

26 May 2021

Reappearance in custody

Reappears before State Security Prosecution and is charged

After five days at an unknown location, he appeared on 26 May 2021 before the Supreme State Security Prosecution, which ordered his pretrial detention in case 238 of 2021 on charges of spreading false news, misusing social media and terrorism-related offences.

September 2021

Medical care denied

Hospital transfer recommended but not carried out

The prison doctor recommended his transfer to Qasr El Einy hospital for a suspected kidney tumour. According to his family, he had still not been transferred some 50 days later.

26 October 2021

Call by others

Rights groups call for his release after 150 days

A joint letter from rights groups called on the Egyptian authorities to release him after 150 days in detention, saying he was held for his media work. His detention had last been renewed for 45 days on 11 October 2021.

December 2021

Transfer between places of detention

Transferred to Abu Zaabal prison

He was moved from Tora Investigation prison to Abu Zaabal prison, where he was held for two years. For about 12 months he was denied books and newspapers and family visits were severely restricted.

1 January 2024

Transfer between places of detention

Transferred to Badr 1 prison

He was moved to Badr 1 prison, where he was held in a cell with eight other people for 23 hours a day.

9 July 2024

Call by others

Amnesty calls for his release and medical care

Amnesty International issued an urgent call for his release and for him to receive adequate medical care.

1 October 2026

Hearing

Trial adjourned to 26 December 2026

The Second Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court, sitting in Badr, adjourned his trial in case 238 of 2021 to 26 December 2026 to add exhibits.

04

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: This record was checked against current sources. Tawfiq Ghanem remains in Badr 1 prison, on trial in Case No. 238 of 2021 before the Second Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court; on 1 October 2026 the trial was adjourned to 26 December 2026. Lawyer Sayed Said Khalaf is held in the same case.

Background and Work

Tawfiq Ghanem built a career in Egyptian journalism spanning several decades. He was regional director of Anadolu Agency in Cairo until he retired in 2015, and was also formerly editor in chief of IslamOnline. He focused his reporting on government accountability, civil liberties, and freedom of expression. His work centered on amplifying questions of transparency and human rights in Egypt's public sphere. Colleagues describe his journalism as methodical and grounded in documentary evidence.

Ghanem came of age during a period of intense political transformation in Egypt and the wider Arab world. He chose journalism as his vehicle for civic engagement, writing on issues that often placed him at odds with successive administrations. His reporting examined the intersection of state power and individual freedoms, themes that have defined his professional life.

The Arrest

Tawfiq Ghanem was arrested on 21 May 2021. Rights groups described him as 66 years old in October 2021. State Security officers arrested him at his home in Giza, confiscated his laptop and took him to an unknown place. He reappeared on 26 May 2021 before the Supreme State Security Prosecution, which charged him in case 238 of 2021 with joining a terrorist group and ordered his pretrial detention.

He was later transferred to Badr 1 Prison in Badr City, a large detention complex east of Cairo that houses hundreds of pre-trial detainees in State Security cases. The facility is known for overcrowded conditions and limited access to legal counsel and family visits.

Detention Conditions and Health

Ghanem's health has declined significantly during his prolonged detention. He has developed multiple medical conditions that require specialized care beyond what the prison medical clinic can provide. The prison doctor has formally recommended that he be transferred to an external hospital for treatment. Despite this recommendation, no transfer has taken place.

The denial of adequate medical care is compounded by his age and the length of his detention. Family members have raised concerns about his deteriorating condition, but access to him has been limited. Badr 1 Prison operates under strict visitation protocols, and visits are often denied or delayed without explanation.

Legal Proceedings

Ghanem was charged on 26 May 2021 and then held in pretrial detention for years before his case went to trial. His detention was renewed approximately every 45 days by the State Security Prosecution, a mechanism that allows Egyptian

authorities to hold individuals indefinitely without trial under the country's emergency and counterterrorism legal framework.

The State Security Prosecution later referred Ghanem to criminal trial. The charges include joining a terrorist organization, spreading false news, and misusing social media platforms. These charges are commonly applied to journalists, activists, and political dissidents in Egypt, often on the basis of their published work or online activity.

His trial is under way before the Second Terrorism Circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court; on 1 October 2026 it was adjourned to 26 December 2026. Ghanem remains in Badr 1 Prison. His legal team continues to seek his release on health grounds and to challenge the legality of his prolonged pre-trial detention. Egyptian law nominally limits pre-trial detention to two years, but this limit is routinely exceeded in State Security cases through procedural workarounds.

International Response

International human rights organizations have documented Ghanem's case as part of a broader pattern of judicial harassment targeting journalists and freedom-of-expression defenders in Egypt. His prolonged detention without trial, the denial of medical care, and the vague national-security charges against him exemplify the tools used to silence critical voices.

Legal-assistance organizations have prioritized his case, providing representation and seeking to expedite proceedings. However, State Security cases in Egypt move slowly, and defendants often spend years in detention before reaching trial. Ghanem's age and medical condition add urgency to calls for his immediate release.

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

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