# Egypt: End arbitrary detention, Free them all

Joint Statements · Egypt · 10 March 2022

Twelve Egyptian activists have been on hunger strike since early February 2022 in protest of their prolonged pre-trial detention at Tora Prison Complex. Among them, **Abdelrahman Tarek (Moka), Ahmed Maher (Rigo), Galal El Beheriy,** and **Walid Shawky** started hunger strikes to protest their unlawful imprisonment. On 8 March, Walid Shawky ended his hunger strike. Their health is at risk as their physical condition further deteriorates. The undersigned organizations call on the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the aforementioned individuals, as well as all of the many other individuals currently held in detention for peacefully exercising their right to free expression.

**Ahmed Maher (Rigo)** has been in pre-trial detention since May 2020 on charges of joining a terrorist group, publishing false news, and misuse of social media. The court ordered his release under Case no. 586/2020 in October 2020, however, the State Security Prosecution ordered his detention over the same charges under another case, Case no. 885/2020.

**Abdelrahman Tarek (Moka)** served a three-year prison sentence followed by probation after participating in a protest against military trials for civilians in August 2013. He was arrested again in September 2019 on accusations of joining a terrorist group and has been in pre-trial detention since. In March 2020, the court ordered his release and the replacement of his pre-trial detention with probation measures. However, in April 2020, he was rotated under a different case number with the same charges. In September 2020, the Criminal Court ordered his release, but this decision was never implemented. He was subsequently forcibly disappeared for more than 60 days and later reappeared. He was then charged under a third case with the same charges, Case no.1056/2020. In late 2020, he began a 53-day hunger strike, also in protest of his prolonged detention without trial. He concluded the strike on 4 February 2021 due to his deteriorating health and pressure exerted by prison authorities.

**Galal El Beheriy** was arrested on 3 March 2018 and disappeared for a week before reappearing to charges of terrorist affiliation, disseminating false news, abusing social media networks, blasphemy, contempt of religion, and insulting the military. He was subjected to torture and beating during his disappearance. On 31 July 2018, he was sentenced to three years in prison, including a fine of 10,000 L.E. for his poetry, on charges of insulting the military and spreading false news.

Security forces arrested Dr. **Walid Shawky** from his clinic in Cairo on 14 October 2018. Thereafter, he was forcibly disappeared for six days. Shawky later appeared at the State Security Prosecution and was accused of joining a terrorist group and publishing false news in Case no. 621/2018. In August 2020, the Criminal Court released him under this case. However, the State Security Prosecution subsequently ordered Shawky's detention over the same charges under another case,

Case no. 880/2020.

The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention highlighted “a systemic problem with arbitrary detention in Egypt”, adding that “under certain circumstances, widespread or systematic imprisonment or other severe deprivation of liberty in violation of the rules of international law could constitute crimes against humanity.”

There are tens of thousands of individuals arbitrarily detained in Egypt including activists, political figures, journalists, students, lawyers, staff of civil society organizations, human rights defenders (HRD) including women human rights defenders (WHRD), family members of political opponents and human rights defenders whose place of residence is abroad, women social media influencers, as well as individuals voicing criticism to political, economic or social conditions. The following individuals are among those in arbitrary detention; some have been sentenced while the majority are in pre-trial detention:

- **Abdel Moneim Aboul-Fotouh** (politician)
- **Abdel Rahman Tarek Mokka** (HRD)
    - **Ahmed Allam** (journalist)
- **Ahmed Amasha** (veterinarian, environmental activist, HRD and trade unionist)
- **Ahmed Badawy**
    - **Ahmed Douma** (activist and writer), sentenced by Criminal Court
- **Ahmed Maher (Rigo)**
- **Ahmed Sebei** (journalist)
- **Ahmed Mohy**
- **Ahmed Samir Santawi,** sentenced by Emergency State Security Court
- **Ahmed Tammam** (HRD)
- **Aisha El Shater** (WHRD)
- **Alaa Abdel Fattah** (HRD and blogger), sentenced by Emergency State Security Court
- **Alaa Essam** (HRD)
- **Amr Imam** (HRD and lawyer)

- **Anas al-Beltagy**
- **Amr Nohan** (HRD and lawyer)
- **Ayman Abdel Moaaty** (researcher)
- **Azoz Mahgoub** (lawyer)
- **Bahaa Eldin Ibrahim** (journalist)
    - **Bader Mohamed** (journalist)
- **Dawlat Yehia**
- **Ezzat Ghoneim** (HRD and lawyer)
- **Gaffer al-Zaafarani,** sentenced by Criminal Court
- **Galal El Beheriy** (poet), sentenced by military court
- **Haytham Mohammadein** (HRD and lawyer)
- **Hamdy El-Zaime** (journalist)
- **Haneen Hossam** (woman online-content creator), sentenced by Criminal Court
- **Hassan Barbari** (HRD)
- **Hassan Mostafa**
- **Hisham Abdelaziz** (journalist)
- **Hisham Fouad** (journalist), sentenced by Emergency State Security Court
- **Houssam Moanis** (journalist), sentenced by Emergency State Security Court
- **Hoda Abdel Moneim** (WHRD and lawyer)
- **Hossam Khalaf**
- **Hussein Khamis Mohammed Chabel**
- **Ibrahim Ezz el-Din** (HRD)
- **Ibrahim Metwaly** (HRD and lawyer)

- **Ismail Alexandrani** (journalist), sentenced by a military court
- **Kholoud Saied Amer**
- **Marwa Arafa**
- **Moaatez AbdelWahab** (producer)
- **Mohamed Adel** (HRD)
- **Mohamed El Baqer** (HRD and lawyer), sentenced by Emergency State Security Court
- **Mohammed al-Qassas** (activist and politician)
- **Mohamed Ibrahim Radwan 'Oxygen'** (HRD and journalist/blogger), sentenced by Emergency State Security Court
- **Mohamed Mohieldin**
- **Mohamed Saied Fahmy** (journalist)
- **Mohamed Ramadan** (HRD and lawyer)
- **Mohamed Salah** (journalist)
- **Mostafa Gamal**
- **Mawadda al-Adham** (woman online-content creator), sentenced by Criminal Court
- **Nermeen Hussein** (blogger)
- **Omar El Shenety** (economist)
- **Radwa Mohamed Farid**
- **Safwan Thabet**
- **Salah Soltan** (PDF)**,** sentenced by Criminal Court
- **Seif Fateen** (professor of engineering)
- **Said Abdellah** (journalist)
- **Seif Thabet**

- **Tawfiq Ghanem** (journalist)
- **Walid Shawky** (dentist and activist)
- **Zyad El-Elaimy** (human rights lawyer and politician), sentenced by Emergency State Security Court

UN Special Procedures have raised serious concerns over inhumane prison conditions, including denial of family visits, lack of access to lawyers, and inadequate medical care leading to or contributing to deaths in custody. They have urged Egypt to "promptly address its prison conditions and reverse what appears to be deeply entrenched practices that are severely infringing on people's right to life, the right not to be subjected to arbitrary detention, the right not to be subjected to torture or ill-treatment, the right to due process and a fair trial, and adequate medical care." Women detainees face torture and gender-based violence in custody committed by authorities in complete impunity. UN Special Procedures and the CEDAW Committee have raised concerns about the lack of gender-specific measures that meet the needs of women detainees, the denial of access to facilities and materials required to meet women's personal hygiene needs, the lack of redress mechanisms and accountability for victims of gender-based and sexual violence, the lack of medical care and unhygienic conditions in prisons, and the use of strip searches and prolonged solitary confinement as a punishment.

On 12 March 2021, 31 states at the UN Human Rights Council urged Egypt to end its persecution of activists, journalists and political opponents; called on Egypt to release them unconditionally; and urged the country to end the "the practice of adding detainees to new cases with similar charges after the legal limit for pre-trial detention has expired" (rotation). A year later, Egypt has failed to respond to these calls.

We urge Egypt to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release anyone held in detention for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom expression, association and assembly, as well as their right to defend human rights; release others detained arbitrarily, including those held in prolonged pre-trial detention without the possibility to challenge the lawfulness of their detention; cease the practice of charging defendants in new cases based on the same set of facts, commonly called "rotation"; and protect those in custody from torture and other ill-treatment and ensure their regular access to their families, lawyers of their choosing, and adequate medical care, including in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic;
2. Immediately quash the unjust verdicts issued, drop all charges, and bring an immediate end to the ongoing trials against individuals arbitrarily detained whose cases were referred to emergency courts prior to the lifting of the state of emergency.

We urge states and civil society to stand in solidarity with all individuals arbitrarily detained in Egypt; urge Egypt to immediately and unconditionally release them, and provide them with

comprehensive and adequate reparations for the arbitrary deprivation of their liberty and other harm suffered.

**Signatories:**

1. Andalus Institute For Tolerance and Anti-violence Studies
2. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
3. CIVICUS
4. Committee for Justice
5. DIGNITY – Danish Institute Against Torture
6. Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms
7. Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR)
8. Egyptian human rights forum
9. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
10. EuroMed Rights
11. EgyptWide for Human Rights
12. Fédération Internationale des droits humains
13. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
14. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
15. MENA Rights Group
16. PEN America
17. PEN International
18. Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED)
19. The Freedom Initiative
20. The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
21. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
22. Democracy for The Arab World Now (DAWN)

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