HuMENA condemns the reported torture of Matsada2sh journalists and calls for an independent investigation

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HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement condemns the reportede torture and ill treatment that journalists of the independent fact checking platform Matsada2sh reported to the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) following their arrest. Between 28 and 29 September 2026, Egyptian security forces raided homes and arrested Mohamed Ashraf Abu Emeira, Abdallah Qadry, Islam Barakat, Omar Helal, Mohamed Mahmoud and Mohamed Adel at various locations across Egypt, confiscating their phones and laptops. The six make up the platform's entire newsroom. EIPR, which represents all six, describes this as the first time the whole newsroom of a media outlet has been detained in Egypt.

According to the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), most of the journalists testified before the SSSP that they had been subjected to various forms of torture and mistreatment. They described being held and interrogated at National Security facilities with their hands bound behind their backs and their eyes blindfolded. They also reported beatings, forced stripping, electric shocks and threats against themselves and their families, and stated that officers forced them to record fabricated confessions that could be used to convict them. Their whereabouts were concealed for five days, until their interrogation began on Sunday 4 October.

As of 7 October, all six Matsada2ech journalists remained detained. the journalists had been ordered detained for 15 days pending investigation on charges of joining a terrorist group, spreading false news and using a social media platform for that purpose, while investigations with the others were ongoing. The Ministry of Interior has accused the platform of links to the Muslim Brotherhood and described it as unlicensed and managed from abroad; Matsada2sh rejected these accusations the same day.

Torture is absolutely prohibited under the Convention against Torture and Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Egypt is a party. Article 52 of the Egyptian Constitution makes torture in all its forms a crime with no statute of limitations, and Article 55 renders null any statement proven to have been made by a detainee under duress. Article 15 of the Convention against Torture prohibits the use of any statement obtained through torture as evidence. Article 12 obliges the authorities to conduct a prompt and impartial investigation wherever there are reasonable grounds to believe torture has occurred. The journalists gave their testimony directly to the prosecution, which is therefore on notice and bound to act. The concealment of their whereabouts for five days also violates Article 54 of the Constitution, which

requires that any person arrested be presented to the investigating authority within 24 hours and be allowed to contact their family and lawyer.

The reported methods of abuse, together with the coerced recording of confessions, point to an effort to manufacture evidence for terrorism and false news charges against journalists whose work consists of verifying public information. More than 80 human rights, press and civil society organizations have already condemned the arrests, and according to EIPR, these arrests bring the number of journalists detained in Egypt in connection with their work to 26.

HuMENA calls on the Egyptian authorities to:

1. Release Mohamed Ashraf Abu Emeira, Abdallah Qadry, Islam Barakat, Omar Helal, Mohamed Mahmoud and Mohamed Adel immediately and unconditionally, and drop all charges arising from their journalistic work.
2. Opena prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the reported torture and ill treatment allegations, order an immediate examination of all six by the Forensic Medicine Authority, and hold those responsible accountable.
3. Exclude the recorded confessions and any other statements obtained under coercion from the case file, and refrain from broadcasting or circulating them and ensure that they
4. Disclose the journalists' places of detention, guarantee their regular access to lawyers, families and medical care, and protect them from reprisals for having reported the abuse.
5. Return the confiscated devices and end the use of counterterrorism charges against journalists.

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