Egypt | Rights Groups Call on Egyptian Authorities to Immediately Release Dr. Salah Soltan and All Wrongfully Detained Prisoners Sentenced in Case No. 1766 of 2022

Joint Statements · Egypt · 10 July 2025

We, the undersigned organizations, are deeply alarmed by the news that Egyptian academic and U.S. lawful permanent resident Dr. Salah Soltan is enduring a potentially life-threatening medical crisis and is at increased risk of sudden death while detained in Egypt's Badr 1 prison without sufficient medical care. We urge the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release him from detention, and in the interim, urgently provide him with access to the life-saving healthcare that he needs, and provide his family with full, comprehensive information on his medical conditions.

For more than a decade the Egyptian government has targeted the Soltan family for their human rights advocacy. Most recently, this targeting has taken the form of Egypt's Case No. 1766 of 2022, in which a Cairo terrorism court sentenced U.S. citizen Mohamed Soltan in absentia to life in prison on June 24, 2025. The conviction is yet another example of the Egyptian government's intimidation of the Soltan family and appears to be an act of reprisal for Mohamed's efforts to secure the release of his father. This ongoing repression has severe effects for Dr. Salah Soltan, a U.S. person, the father of five U.S. citizens, and the grandfather of five U.S. citizens.

On June 18, the Soltan family learned that Dr. Salah had suffered a serious medical episode while held in solitary confinement in which he abruptly lost consciousness and woke up an indeterminate amount of time later with no memory of how he had collapsed. A family member said that after being discovered in his cell, Dr. Salah was transferred to the prison's medical center and received an MRI scan. Though attending doctors expressed concerns of a possible stroke or internal brain hemorrhage, since then, Dr. Salah has not received any updates on his medical condition or a diagnosis, despite the information being available to doctors. Dr. Salah has long suffered from well-documented, deliberate, lack of sufficient medical care for years despite his serious, potentially life-threatening, medical conditions, which may constitute torture. One family member with medical expertise said that during a visit on June 29, 2025, the family learned that this fainting episode was not an isolated incident, but is becoming increasingly common. Dr. Salah's family has voiced concerns that if he continues to be held in solitary confinement, he will die, as he is both deprived of proper medical care from prison authorities and any potential assistance from other prisoners.

Unfortunately, the dire conditions and insufficient medical care provided to Dr. Salah Soltan is standard for many in Egypt's prison system. Seven of the 19 people sentenced in Case No. 1766 of

2022 alongside Mohamed Soltan are currently detained in Egypt and are immediately and directly exposed to the Egyptian prison system and its well-documented human rights abuses. Among them is activist Moaz El-Sharqawy, held in the notorious Badr 3 Prison, where conditions are especially severe. Moaz was sentenced to 10 years in prison without being interrogated in the case. Following his 2023 arrest, he was forcibly disappeared for over 20 days and has faced serious due process violations. He endures severe restrictions, including visits conducted through glass cabins that prevent physical contact, harassment of family members, routine denial of basic supplies such as food and clothing, and is allowed exercise only once a week.

The convictions in Case No. 1766 of 2022 are also part of the Egyptian government's long-standing pattern of abusive persecution of peaceful critics and efforts to intimidate those living abroad. For example, UK-based human rights defender Iman Mohamed was also sentenced to life imprisonment in absentia in the same case as Mohamed Soltan. This appears to be retaliation for her ongoing work defending human rights and speaking out against abuses in Egypt. The Egyptian government has previously used abusive prosecutions to target critics beyond its borders, and we are concerned that Egyptian authorities will use the convictions last week as part of its transnational repression efforts, including the potential misuse of international legal mechanisms to target dissidents.

The undersigned organizations urge the Egyptian authorities to halt their targeting of activists, critics, and human rights defenders, including by overturning the sentences issued in Case No. 1766 of 2022 and releasing all individuals unjustly detained. We call on the Egyptian government to halt its targeting of the Soltan family and to immediately release Dr. Salah Soltan and all others unjustly detained in Egypt. In the interim, we urge the Egyptian authorities to urgently provide Dr. Salah Soltan with the medical care he requires.

Signatures:

1. Human Rights Watch
2. Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)
3. Law and Democracy Support Foundation (LDSF)
4. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
5. Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
6. Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
7. MENA Rights Group (MRG)
8. Egyptian Front for Human Rights EFHR
9. Sinai Foundation for Human Rights (SFHR)
10. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
11. El Nadim Center
12. Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedom (ECRF)

13. Refugee Platform in Egypt (RPE)
14. EuroMed Rights Network
15. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
16. REDWORD for Human Rights & Freedom of Expression

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