HuMENA Condemns the Detention of Cartoonist Ashraf Omar and Calls for His Immediate Release

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HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement strongly condemns the recent detention of renowned Egyptian cartoonist Ashraf Omar. He was recently thrown behind bars for his poignant drawings, which criticized the system and exercised his right to free speech, an act that is protected by international human rights laws and Egypt's constitution.

Ashraf Omar's arrest is part of a broader pattern of repression targeting artists, journalists, and activists in Egypt, aimed at stifling dissent and silencing voices critical of the government. For many years now, the cartoonist's works have been truthful, revealing the social issues experienced by Egyptians while using art to hold those in power responsible for their actions.

The Egyptian regime's crackdown on "artivism" (art + activism) is a troubling trend. It undermines art that challenges wrongs and builds public opinion by arresting people who make activism out of creative expression. In concrete terms, such repressive strategies can be seen in cases like Ashraf Omar's, which endangers the rich cultural heritage/identity/existence propping up Egypt's diverse artistic canvas.

HuMENA calls on the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ashraf Omar. We also urge international bodies and other human rights organizations supporting freedom of expression to join hands with us in demanding justice.

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