The Egyptian authorities must immediately release Mohamed Adel and guarantee his safety, while bearing full responsibility for the deterioration of his health

Joint Statements · Egypt · 9 September 2024

The undersigned human rights organizations urge the Egyptian authorities to immediately release political activist Mohamed Adel, and to comply with their duty to protect his life and health, now in danger due to the hunger strike he started in protest against the illegal renewal of his detention and the restrictions imposed on him in prison.

On 26 July, Adel announced his refusal to accept food provided either by his family or the prison. His family officially notified the Public Prosecutor in report No. 45933/2024, highlighting his deteriorating health and his demand that the period of his pretrial detention be deducted from the total four-year sentence he received in 2023. According to his family, Adel began his hunger strike on 18 August; to the present day, the prison administration refuses to officially document it.

Mohamed Adel is a prominent political activist currently serving a four-year prison sentence handed down in September 2023 by the Aja Misdemeanor Court of Appeal in Mansoura for allegedly ‘spreading false news on social media’. This draconian sentence came after nine years of arbitrary detention in retaliation for his peaceful political activism, based on similar fabricated and repeated charges in multiple cases.

Between 2013 and 2017, Adel served an unjust three-year prison sentence for participating in ‘unlicensed protests’ under the repressive Protest Law (107 of 2013). After his release in 2017, he was subjected to police probation for several months before being detained again in June 2018 in two separate cases (5606 and 4118 of 2018), in which he was charged under the same allegations, both related to his activism. In 2020, he was charged in a third case (467 of 2020), with accusations similar to those for which he was already being investigated in the first two cases.

As a result of the investigation into these three cases, Mohamed Adel remained in pretrial detention from June 2018 until September 2023, when the most recent sentence was issued, contravening the legally-permissible time limit for pretrial detention of 24 months, set by the Egyptian Criminal Procedure Code (PDF). Charging the same individual in multiple cases, a practice known as the ‘recycling’ of charges, is an illegal tactic used by the Egyptian authorities against political opponents to ensure that their detention is prolonged indefinitely. These individuals are investigated in multiple cases over time, often in relation to the same accusations and incidents. It contravenes the principle of double jeopardy, deriving from the principle of legality enshrined in Article 14(7) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 95 of the Egyptian Constitution, and

Article 454 of the Egyptian Code of Criminal Procedure.

According to Adel's lawyer, judicial authorities are now refusing to deduct the period he spent in pretrial custody from his sentence, and instead are insisting on detaining him for an additional four years, from September 2023 until September 2027. The correct end date of Adel's sentence is February 2025, if the judicial authorities were to deduct his already-served pretrial detention period in accordance with both Egyptian and international law.

Mohamed Adel's health has significantly deteriorated in jail. According to his family, he is suffering from peripheral neuropathy, arthritis in the knee, and more recently, chest pain and muscular atrophy in his shoulder. In May and July 2024, Adel was admitted to the prison hospital, and examinations revealed his worsening health to be due to a lack of exposure to sunlight and physical therapy. The prison hospital only provided him with some painkillers and mild medication.

Detention facilities in Egypt are largely characterized by harsh and unsuitable living and sanitation conditions, as documented and condemned (PDF) by numerous human rights organizations. Dire detention conditions exacerbate the inhumane treatment routinely faced by prisoners, including repeated denial of medical care, as the case of Mohamed Adel exemplifies.

We, the signatory organizations, reiterate our demand for the immediate and unconditional release of activist Mohamed Adel, the closure of all open cases against him, and the provision of urgent medical care suitable to his condition as a hunger striker. We also emphasize the need to end policies of arbitrary detention, judicial harassment, and the 'recycling' of charges used as tools to silence opponents, activists, and citizens simply for peacefully exercising their fundamental rights to freedom of opinion and expression.

Signatory Organizations:

1. Access Now
2. ADALA FOR ALL
3. Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression
4. Burundian Human rights defenders Coalition (CBDDH)
5. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies
6. Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia
7. CNCD-11.11.11
8. Coalition Burkinabè des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CBDDH)
9. Committee for Justice
10. Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms
11. Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms
12. Egyptian Front for Human Rights
13. Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)

14. Egyptian Initiative For Personal Rights
15. EgyptWide for Human Rights
16. El Nadim Center
17. EuroMed Rights
18. Gohoud to Support Human Rights Defenders
19. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
20. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
21. Intersection Association for rights and freedoms
22. Law and Democracy Support Foundation
23. Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)
24. Refugees' platform in Egypt
25. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
26. Sinai Foundation for Human Rights
27. Syrian Female Journalists Network
28. The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
29. The Tunisian Association for the Defense of Individual Liberties (ADLI)
30. Unidosc, Mexico
31. West African Human Rights Defenders' Network
32. Women for Justice Foundation (WJF)
33. World Movement for Democracy

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