Egypt | Urgent Call for Independent Investigation into Torture and Death of Mahmoud Mika in Egyptian Custody

Joint Statements · Egypt · 31 May 2025

We, the undersigned rights organizations, express our alarm over the growing number of detainee deaths in Egyptian prisons, amid consistent indications that many of these deaths were a result of torture and ill-treatment in detention facilities. We further condemn the Egyptian government's entrenchment of impunity through its policies and practices, which collectively lack any credible mechanisms of investigation, oversight, or accountability in cases of death in custody – most recently Mahmoud Mika – a young man and Egyptian citizen who died on 10 April 2025 while held in Khalifa Police Station.A ccording to documented testimonies from his family members who witnessed the washing of his body, there were clear marks all over his body of torture, deep wounds, and severe beating, including conspicuous lash marks on his back apparently inflicted with a hose-like instrument. There were also signs that Mika was bound around his neck and at his wrists and ankles.

Mahmoud Mika was arrested at dawn by three police officers on 6 March 2025, during Ramadan, while he was out shopping with his mother in the Khalifa neighborhood. Despite being charged with drug possession by the prosecution, the authorities did not show his lawyer any seized illicit items at the station. Mika had previously been arrested in December 2024 following an altercation with a police officer and a sergeant, the same two officials who re-arrested him in March.

According to testimonies from detainees in the same cell, Mika was tortured and assaulted in front of others after a verbal altercation with one of the officers, where he then died in their presence inside the holding area . Mika was then moved by prison officials to the cell for solitary confinement, in an apparent attempt to cover up the crime. The witnesses to the crime stated that they and their families were threatened to retract their statements before the prosecution.

Mahmoud Mika's family has yet to receive a copy of the forensic report detailing his cause of death, amidst ongoing obfuscation and stalling. The Ministry of Interior issued a brief statement denying that Mika was tortured, claiming his death resulted from a fight with another detainee; a narrative completely contradicted by detainee testimonies documented in the prosecution's investigation.

Mahmoud Mika's untimely death is neither an isolated nor unusual event but must be viewed within a systematic pattern of abuse and violations in detention centers. The lack of transparency, intimidation of witnesses, withholding of the forensic report, and attempts to destroy evidence all serve to undermine trust in the justice system. Similar cases of suspicious detainee deaths were documented at Khalifa Police Station in 2009, 2014, and 2024.In 2023, the United Nations

Committee Against Torture confirmed that torture in Egypt is practiced on a ‘widespread and systematic’ scale; a finding that demands a serious response from the authorities.

We, the undersigned, call for an immediate and independent investigation into the death of Mahmoud Mika. His family and lawyer must be provided with a copy of the full forensic report, and witnesses must be guaranteed protection from any threats or reprisals. It is of paramount importance that the results of the investigation are publicly disclosed and that all those culpable for this crime are brought to justice.

We underscore the importance of activating a transparent, independent monitoring mechanism over detention facilities in Egypt to protect detainees’ lives and prevent the recurrence of unjust deaths in custody. To this end, it is essential to allow the International Committee of the Red Cross and independent civil society organizations to visit detention sites regularly and unimpeded. We further call on the Egyptian government to extend an official invitation to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture to visit the country, assess the conditions of detention facilities, and meet with victims and their families, as a first step toward transparency and accountability. We urge the Public Prosecution to fulfill its role in independent oversight through unannounced and regular inspections of detention facilities, and to publish the findings transparently to ensure accountability in cases of negligence or complicity.

Finally, we demand the urgent enactment of a comprehensive anti-torture law, aligned with the UN Convention Against Torture, which Egypt has ratified. The law must explicitly criminalize torture as a non-prescription crime (not subject to statute of limitations).

Signatories:

- Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF)
- El Nadeem Center
- Sinai Foundation for Human Rights
- Egyptian Front for Human Rights
- Egyptian Human Rights Forum
- Foundation for Law and Democracy Support
- Refugees Platform in Egypt
- Committee for Justice
- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
- Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
- Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE)
- EgyptWide for Human Rights
- Egyptian Network for Human Rights
- Human Rights Monitor

- El-Shehab Center for Human Rights – London
- HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
- RedWord for Human Rights and Freedom of Expression

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