We reject the verdicts of the exceptional courts against human rights defenders and activists in Egypt

Joint Statements · Egypt · 21 December 2021

The undersigned organizations condemn the Emergency State Security Court's verdict on December 20, of 5 years' imprisonment for activist Alaa Abdel-Fattah، and 4 years in prison for lawyer Mohamed El-Baqer and blogger Mohamed Ibrahim (Oxygen) in case no. 1228 of 2021, calling on the President to repeal this verdict, in accordance with his authority.

Yesterday's verdict was issued by an exceptional court that lacks the minimum standards for fair trials. This verdict cannot be appealed in any way. Moreover, the trial process witnessed a number of violations of the three activists' right to defend themselves. Over the course of three hearings prior to pronouncing the verdict, the court did not respond to any of the requests submitted by the three activists' defense, including the detained activists' consultation with their lawyers, and obtaining a photocopy of the case file. Additionally, the three defendants were not confronted with any evidence of the accusations attributed to them, except for some old posts on Facebook. The court did not allow international observers to attend the sessions, even though they were public sessions. During the ruling session, there was a failed attempt to evacuate the court from the activists' families. The verdict was read out by the court bailiff, while the judge did not come out to read it.

The three activists have been in pre-trial detention since they were arrested in September 2019, in the supreme state security case No. 1356 of 2019. They have been charged with joining a terrorist group and spreading false news that harms state security. One of this case's charges was copied to refer them to trial in the case, in which the verdict was issued yesterday. Moreover in August 2021, the State Security Prosecution charged human rights lawyer Mohamed Al-Baqer in a new case no. 855 of 2020, with the same charges in the first case.

During their detention, the three activists suffered from harsh and inhumane detention conditions, including torture and mistreatment since the beginning of their detention, in addition to the intermittent denial of visits to the activist, Alaa Abdel-Fattah. As well as depriving blogger Mohamed Ibrahim of visits for more than 15 months, which prompted him to attempt suicide in prison, before his life was rescued. Moreover, Mohamed Al-Baqer and Alaa Abd al-Fattah were added to the terrorist lists, in November 2020.

This verdict, which came a few months after the Egyptian government declared the first "National Strategy for Human Rights", reminds us of the real strategy in which the rights and freedoms of citizens are managed within the state, which completely contradicts what is written in national

documents and plans that are celebrated in conference rooms or before the international human rights mechanisms, and the international community.

The undersigned organizations reiterate their rejection of the referral of the Egyptian human rights defenders and activists to trials – especially exceptional ones – for their legitimate work in human rights defense, or practicing their constitutional right to freedom of expression. The organizations also call on the President to repeal the verdict, issued yesterday against the three activists, and to end their prolonged pre-trial detention, in violation of the law.

Signatories:

1. AFD International
2. ASWAT NISSA
3. CALAM Association – Tunisia
4. Damj – Tunisian Association for Justice and Equality
5. Dancers Southern Citizens Association – Tunisia
6. Democratic Transition & Human Rights Support – DAAM
7. Euro-Mediterranean for Human Rights Monitor
8. Geneva Council for Rights and Liberties
9. Gohoud to Support Human Rights Defenders
10. HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
11. Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms
12. Nachaz Association
13. Nomad08 Association- Tunisia
14. Observatory for the defense of the right to be different – Tunisia
15. organization against torture in Tunisia
16. Organization of the Martyr of Freedom Nabil Barkati
17. Outcasts Tunisia
18. Skyline International for Human Rights
19. Tunisian Association of Defending Individual liberties
20. Tunisian Coalition Against the Death Penalty
21. Tunisian League of Human Rights
22. Tunisian Youth Leaders organization
23. Innovation for Change (I4C) – MENA hub

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