

URGENT ACTION

ARBITRARILY DETAINED COUPLE REMAINS HELD

On 3 July 2019, a judge ordered the release of Ola al-Qaradawi after over two years of arbitrary solitary confinement over unfounded charges. However, the Egyptian authorities decided to imprison Ola in another case, over unfounded charges including “using her connections in prison to fund terrorist groups”, despite her being in solitary confinement the whole time. Hossam Khalaf, Ola’s husband, is awaiting his detention renewal hearing, which has been postponed until 3 August.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Public Prosecutor Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Dar alQada Al-Ali, Downtown Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2577 4716
Twitter: @EgyptJustice

Dear Counsellor,

On 3 July 2019 a judge ordered Ola al-Qaradawi’s release under probation. However instead of releasing her, on 4 July, the Supreme State Security Prosecution decided to charge her with new, similar charges and imprison her again. She was charged of “using her connections in prison to fund terrorist groups”, despite being in solitary confinement the whole time. Ola began a hunger strike against the decision.

Since 30 June 2017, Ola al-Qaradawi has been held in pre-trial detention, in Al-Qanater Women Prison in Qalyubia governorate, over unfounded charges. Her solitary cell is about 160 cm by 180 cm, without a bed or toilet and without sufficient ventilation and lighting.

Hossam Khalaf, Ola’s husband, is awaiting his detention extension hearing, which has been postponed until 3 August 2019. The last time that a judge extended his detention was on 17 April 2019 for 45 days. Since then, his extension hearing has been postponed three times. Ola and Hossam have not been allowed to receive any visits by their family or lawyers, since their arrest. According to their relatives and lawyers, their health condition has worsened due to the lack of adequate food and medical care.

In view of the fact that Ola al-Qaradawi and Hossam Khalaf are detained and charged arbitrarily, in blatant violation of fair trial rights, I urge you to immediately release Ola al-Qaradawi and Hossam Khalaf. I also call on you to ensure that pending their release, Ola al-Qaradawi and Hossam Khalaf are removed from solitary confinement, can receive visits from their families and lawyers and have access to adequate medical care, in compliance with international standards and medical ethics. Furthermore, I urge you to ensure that all prolonged solitary confinement is brought to an end.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

56 years old Ola al-Qaradawi is a mother to three and grandmother to four girls, and the daughter of Youssef al-Qaradawi, an Egyptian national who lives in Qatar and is designated by the Egyptian authorities as a “terrorist” since June 2017. Hossam Khalaf, Ola’s husband, is an engineer and a member of the legally-registered Islamist Al-Wasat political party. He was previously detained for two years between 2014 and 2016 under investigation for charges of “membership of and financially supporting the Muslim Brotherhood for the purpose of harming national security.” The Public Prosecution ordered his release on 22 March 2016 without formally charging him.

On 30 June 2017, security forces raided Ola al-Qaradawi’s summer house, in the North Coast of Alexandria, while she and Hossam Khalaf were staying there on vacation. Police officers took them to Burj Al-Arab police station in Alexandria and referred both to the Supreme State Security Prosecution in Cairo. Prosecutors interrogated them for two days and ordered their detention for 15 days on the unfounded charges of belonging to and financially supporting the Muslim Brotherhood for the purpose of harming national security. On 3 July 2017, the Supreme State Security Prosecution ordered the detention of Ola al-Qaradawi and Hossam Khalaf on charges of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood. Prison authorities immediately placed them in solitary confinement and denied them access to their lawyers and families. Prosecutors and later judges have been renewing their detention since then. Security forces also raided their apartment in Cairo and confiscated money, Ola al-Qaradawi’s personal jewellery, and Hossam Khalaf’s work documents.

According to their relatives and lawyers, their health condition has worsened due to their prolonged solitary confinement, lack of adequate food and poor medical care. On 7 May 2018, Amnesty International released a report on solitary confinement in Egyptian prisons, the report considered that al-Qaradawi’s solitary confinement and prison conditions amount to torture (for more information see: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/8257/2018/en/>).

On 17 August 2017, a state-appointed committee tasked with overseeing the finances of alleged Muslim Brotherhood affiliates froze Ola al-Qaradawi and Hossam Khalaf’s assets along with those of another 14 individuals, as they believe them to be part of the organization. On 30 August 2017, the Cairo Criminal Court designated Ola al-Qaradawi and Hossam Khalaf’s as “terrorists” under the Terrorist Entities Law, number 8 of 2015. The designation decision relied only on information gathered by the National Security Agency of the Ministry of Interior was made exclusively at the executive level and is not subjected to appeal in the courts. The Egyptian authorities have been using this law arbitrarily and without due process.

Under international law, as reflected in the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules), prolonged solitary confinement, that is, holding prisoners on their own for more than 22 hours a day without meaningful human contact in excess of 15 consecutive days, is prohibited at all time. Amnesty International considers the combination of Ola Al-Qardawi’s prolonged solitary confinement, incommunicado detention and appalling conditions of detention, all of which appear to have been imposed intentionally and with punishment or coercion in mind, to constitute torture as defined in the UN Convention against Torture, to which Egypt is a state party. Such treatment must end immediately and those who ordered it investigated with a view to bringing them to justice.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 22 August 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ola al-Qaradawi (She/her) Hossam Khalaf (He/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/MDE1287032018ENGLISH.pdf>