

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER'S HEALTH AT RISK

On 31 October 2020, the pre-trial detention of human rights researcher Ibrahim Ezz el-Din was renewed for 45 days. His health has been deteriorating since his arrest on 11 June 2019 and his 167 days of enforced disappearance. Ibrahim's poor health puts him at increased risk of the effects of COVID-19 that has reportedly been spreading in Egypt's notoriously overcrowded and unhygienic prisons.

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

Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
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Dear counsellor,

I am writing to you to raise our concerns about the ongoing arbitrary detention of human rights researcher **Ibrahim Ezz el-Din** at the Tora Investigation Prison. Prior to his transfer to prison on 26 November 2019, he was forcibly disappeared for 167 days at undisclosed locations, where he said he was tortured. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful human rights work.

On 31 October 2020, the Cairo Criminal Court renewed Ibrahim's detention for 45 days pending investigations into case No. 488/2019 over baseless charges of "contributing to the achievement of the objectives of a terrorist group" and the "publication of false information undermining national security".

According to informed sources, Ibrahim suffers from an inflammation in his lumbar vertebrae, chronic allergies, and a fungal infection of the tongue due to poor conditions of detention. In April 2020, Ibrahim was taken to the prison's hospital, but the prison authorities did not share his medical record with his family, hindering their ability to consult a private doctor and prescribe him the appropriate dosage of medication. The prison hospital does not have X-ray equipment needed to diagnose Ibrahim's back pain. Ibrahim's poor health puts him at increased risk of the effects of a virus like COVID-19, according to the World Health Organisation's list of vulnerable groups, particularly as he suffers from chronic allergies that cause respiratory difficulties. According to medical professionals familiar with Ibrahim's case, the torture he endured while forcibly disappeared, in addition to the denial of adequate medical care by the Tora Investigation Prison authorities, might have triggered his depression. Ibrahim attempted suicide twice in 2020.

I urge you to release Ibrahim Ezz El-Din immediately and unconditionally given that his detention stems solely from his peaceful human rights work. I call on you to ensure that, pending his release, he has access to adequate health care, including psychiatric services if needed. I also urge you to open an investigation into his enforced disappearance and the torture to which he has been subjected and bring all those responsible to justice in fair trials.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ibrahim is a researcher at the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), where he focuses on the right to housing.

Plain clothes police arrested Ibrahim on the night of 11 June 2019 from the street near his home in Cairo. The authorities concealed his fate and whereabouts for 167 days and denied having him in custody to his relatives and lawyers. On 26 November 2019, Ibrahim was brought before the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP). According to his lawyer, he appeared physically weak and lost a considerable amount of weight. He told the prosecutor that he was tortured during his incommunicado detention to extract information about his relationship to the ECRF and about the organization's work. He also complained about being held in inhumane and degrading conditions of detention, at several security agencies locations.

On 31 October 2020, the pre-trial detention of human rights researcher Ibrahim Ezz El-Din was renewed for 45 days. Ibrahim's lawyers told Amnesty International that he appeared frail and thin during the hearing. Following a prison visit on 27 October 2020, his mother also reported that he seemed withdrawn.

He is the fifth person affiliated with the ECRF to have been arrested since 2016. His arrest follows the detention of labour rights lawyer Haytham Mohamdeen, who also works at ECRF, on 13 May 2019 on trumped-up charges of "aiding a terrorist group". In May 2018, Egyptian security forces arrested Amal Fathy, a human rights defender and wife of the Executive Director of ECRF and former Amnesty International Researcher Mohamed Lotfy, over a video critical of the authorities' failure to address rampant sexual harassment. She was conditionally released in December 2018 and put under house arrest until 14 March 2020 when SSSP lifted all precautionary measures imposed on her. In 2016, authorities had also arrested Minorities Programme Director Mina Thabet and head of the board Ahmed Abdallah, before releasing them without charge.

Ibrahim has been unable to defend his master's thesis as scheduled in December 2019 given his arrest. While Ibrahim's lawyer obtained permission for him to receive books in prison, he was prevented from writing his thesis by prison authorities. Ibrahim is allowed one visit per month for a duration of 10 minutes. He also receives packages that include food and medicines once a week.

Ibrahim's arrest came amid a human rights crisis in Egypt, characterized by a crackdown on independent civil society and arrests of hundreds of individuals over their human rights work or their exercise of their rights to freedom of expression or peaceful assembly. The crackdown has affected journalists, football fans, critics, politicians and staff of civil society organizations. Many of those arrested have been abducted and subjected to enforced disappearances, before being charged with unfounded "terrorism" charges and held in pre-trial detention for months or even years, without trial. ([see more](#))

Amnesty International has documented Egyptian security forces' use of enforced disappearance as a tool against political activists and protesters, including students and children in Egypt ([see more](#)). Hundreds of people forcibly disappeared were arbitrarily arrested and held incommunicado in secret detention with no access to their lawyers or families and no external judicial oversight. ECRF is one of the main Egyptian NGOs working extensively on the issue of enforced disappearances.

Amnesty International has documented how the Egyptian authorities mishandled the outbreak of COVID-19 in prisons and other detention facilities, including by failing to provide prisoners with sanitary products or systematically test and isolate those suspected of infection. The authorities released thousands of prisoners in annual pardons, but this was insufficient to reduce overcrowding. Pre-trial detainees and those held in political cases were excluded from the pardons. Authorities also arbitrarily arrested and harassed relatives and supporters of prisoners for expressing concerns over their health.

The authorities banned prison visits between March and August citing COVID-19 fears but failed to provide regular alternative means of communication between prisoners and their families and lawyers. Prison officials denied any family visits throughout 2020 to several detainees held in relation to political cases. ([see more](#))

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 15 January 2021.

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ibrahim Ezz El-Din (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/1966/2020/en/>