

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER DETAINED IN NEW CASE

On 2 January 2021, Ibrahim Ezz el-Din appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution for investigations in a new case (No. 1018/2020) over baseless charges of "belonging to a terrorist group". On 27 December 2020, the Cairo Criminal Court had ordered his release in another case, after 13 months of arbitrary pre-trial detention, and he had been transferred the next day to the Samanoud police station in the governorate of his residence, in preparation for his release.

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

Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi

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Dear Counsellor,

Ibrahim Ezz el-Din, a human rights researcher, detained arbitrarily since June 2019 appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) on 2 January 2021, just five days after the Cairo Criminal Court ordered his release on probation in case No. 488/2019. He is now under investigations in a new case (No. 1018/2020) over similar baseless charges of "belonging to a terrorist group". Proceedings against Ibrahim were unfair as he was not granted the right to effectively challenge the legality of his detention or the right to adequate defence. Ibrahim's lawyers were present, but they were not allowed to examine the case files including a report prepared by the National Security Agency (NSA), a specialized police force, that was used as the only evidence against him. The SSSP ordered his detention in the new case for 15 days. He was subsequently transferred to Liman Tora Prison.

After the Cairo Criminal Court had ordered Ibrahim's release on probation on 27 December 2020, he was transferred to the Samanoud police station in the governorate of his residence – a procedure that generally precedes release. Ibrahim remained in detention waiting NSA clearance, but instead he was taken for questioning to the SSSP.

According to informed sources, Ibrahim suffers from an inflammation in his lumbar vertebrae (lower back), chronic allergies, and a fungal infection of the tongue due to poor conditions of detention. According to medical professionals familiar with his case, the torture he endured while forcibly disappeared for 167 days from 11 June until 26 November 2019, 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.

Amnesty International considers Ibrahim Ezz el-Din to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful human rights work.

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 without recourse to the death penalty.

Yours sincerely

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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 subjected him to enforced disappearance through concealing 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.

In recent months, the SSSP has been increasingly bypassing court or prosecution decisions to release detainees held in prolonged pre-trial detention by issuing new detention orders pending investigations into similar charges in separate cases, in effect allowing for their indefinite detention without charge or trial. This practice, commonly referred to as "recycling", has been used against several activists and human rights defenders including Mahienour el-Masry, Solafa Magdy, Esraa Abdelfattah, Alaa Abdel Fattah and Mohamed el-Baqer.

In April 2020, Ibrahim was taken to the prison 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.

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. 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 www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/1399/2019/en/).

Amnesty International has documented Egyptian security forces' use of enforced disappearance as a tool against political activists and protesters, (see www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/4368/2016/en/). 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.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 5 March 2021.

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

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

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/3309/2020/en/>