

# URGENT ACTION

## UNJUSTLY JAILED COUPLE HELD INCOMMUNICADO

Aisha el-Shater, daughter of a Muslim Brotherhood senior figure, and her husband lawyer Mohamed Abo Horeira, who were transferred to the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan prison on 1 June and 23 May, respectively, continue to be denied contact with their families and lawyers. They are serving unjust prison terms following their conviction on bogus charges stemming from their family links and peaceful exercise of their human rights. They must be immediately and unconditionally released.

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

*President Abdelfattah al-Sisi*  
*Office of the President*  
*Al Ittihadia Palace*  
*Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt*  
Email: [p.spokesman@op.gov.eg](mailto:p.spokesman@op.gov.eg)  
Twitter: @AlsisiOfficial

Your Excellency,

I am concerned about the arbitrary detention of **Aisha el-Shater**, the 42-year-old daughter of Muslim Brotherhood leader Khairat el-Shater, and her husband lawyer **Mohamed Abo Horeira**, solely in relation to their human rights work and peaceful dissent. On 5 March, an Emergency State Security Court (ESSC) sentenced Aisha el-Shater and Mohamed Abo Horeira to ten and 15 years in prison, respectively, following a grossly unfair trial referred to as the "Coordination for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) case" by Egyptian media. They were convicted of multiple charges, including supporting a terrorist group (the Muslim Brotherhood) and spreading "false news" about human rights abuses by security forces through the ECRF's Facebook page. The court also convicted Ezzat Ghoniem, founder of the ECRF, human rights lawyer [Hoda Abdelmoneim](#) and 26 others and sentenced them to prison terms ranging from five years to life. The court also ruled to add the 30 convicted defendants to the "list of terrorists" which leads to asset freezes and travel bans and place them on police probation for five years after prison. Defendants were denied their right to defence, not to self-incriminate and to genuine review by a higher tribunal. Verdicts by ESSCs are final and cannot be appealed. Only Your Excellency retains the power to authorize, quash or commute sentences or to order a retrial; the decision is pending.

On 1 June, authorities transferred Aisha el-Shater from al-Qanater prison to the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan prison in Sharqia governorate. Her family learned that hygiene conditions in her new cell, which she shares with two other prisoners, are better than her previous conditions in al-Qanater prison. However, she has no access to sunlight and for her exercise outside her cell, she is only allowed to walk in a corridor. She is also banned from having any personal belongings and a refrigerator, which means she cannot receive any perishable food items from her family and must rely on prison food. Aisha el-Shater suffers from aplastic anaemia, a rare and serious condition affecting the blood. Despite this, prison authorities continue to refuse her adequate healthcare, including transfer to an outside hospital if necessary for diagnosis and treatment. On 16 May, Mohamed Abo Horeira was transferred from Badr 3 prison to the 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan prison. His family members are banned from visiting him and have no information about his prison conditions and health. Both Aisha el-Shater and Mohamed Abo Horeira are banned from corresponding with their relatives and lawyers through letters or phone calls.

**I urge you to ensure that Aisha el-Shater, Mohamed Abo Horeira and others convicted in connection with the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms case are immediately and unconditionally released and that their convictions and sentences are quashed as they stem solely from the exercise of their human rights or peaceful dissent. Pending their release, they must be provided with the means to regularly communicate with their family and lawyers and with access to adequate healthcare including outside prison, if necessary.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 1 November 2018, Aisha el-Shater and her husband Mohamed Abo Horeira were arrested from their home in Nasr City, Cairo. Amnesty International learned that Aisha el-Shater was forcibly disappeared for 20 days, during which period she was held at the headquarters of the National Security Agency (NSA) in the Abbasiya neighbourhood of Cairo and subjected to beatings and electric shocks. On 21 November 2018, she appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP), where prosecutors ordered her pretrial detention pending investigations on terrorism-related accusations. Before her arrest, she spoke out on her account on Facebook about human rights violations in Egypt including enforced disappearances, torture and other ill-treatment. Prior to his arrest, lawyer Mohamed Abo Horeira represented detainees suspected of membership in the Muslim Brotherhood. Following his arrest, he was held in an undisclosed location for nearly four months where he was subjected to threats and was hit on the head while handcuffed and blindfolded.

On 1 November 2018, following the arrests of Aisha el-Shater, Mohamed Abo Horeira and 28 other human rights defenders and lawyers, the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), which documented enforced disappearances and the use of the death penalty and provided legal aid to victims, announced the suspension of its human rights work.

Officials at al-Qanater prison for women held Aisha el-Shater in solitary confinement in a small poorly ventilated cell, without a bathroom, from January 2019 to December 2020. Aisha el-Shater has aplastic anemia, a rare and serious condition affecting the blood, which increases the risk of infections and uncontrolled bleeding. Despite this, the authorities have denied her access to adequate and specialized healthcare in an outside hospital. Her health deteriorated in detention, and she was admitted, while handcuffed, to Al-Qasr al-Ainy hospital twice in October 2019, with significant bleeding, and was given a platelet transfusion. During the 15 May 2022 trial hearing, the Emergency State Security Court (ESSC) ordered for Aisha el-Shater's examination by a committee of three doctors to advise on whether she needs treatment outside prison. As she is banned from communicating with the outside world, her family and lawyers have no information on whether the examination had taken place.

On 25 October 2021, President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi announced that he would not extend the state of emergency, in force since 2017, which allowed for the creation of ESSCs. Article 19 of the law governing the state of emergency stipulates that ongoing trials are to continue even after the state of emergency is no longer in force. Proceedings in front of ESSCs are inherently unfair. Defendants are denied the right to appeal their convictions and sentences to a higher independent tribunal. Only the president retains the power to authorize, quash or commute sentences or to order a retrial. Throughout their investigation and trial proceedings, which began on 11 September 2022, defendants in the "ECRF case" were banned from speaking to their lawyers in private. Several were interrogated by SSSP prosecutors without their lawyers present. The court hearings were held in secret in the Badr Prison Complex. Observers, members of the public and relatives of defendants were banned from the hearings. Lawyers also said they were not permitted to access their clients' case files during the investigation. They also said that the court relied on eyewitness testimonies by NSA officers, which were accepted without adequate cross-examination, and did not allow all defendants to speak in court.

Aisha el-Shater's father, Khairat el-Shater, has been imprisoned since July 2013, when the military ousted former president Mohamed Morsi. Since then, the authorities banned the Muslim Brotherhood and rounded-up and prosecuted its leaders and tens of thousands of suspected members and supporters

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL 19 September 2023**

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

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Aisha el-Shater (she/her), Mohamed Abo Horeira (he/his)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/6564/2023/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/6564/2023/en/)