

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER MUST BE RELEASED

Since his arrest on 10 September 2017, Egyptian authorities have arbitrarily detained Ibrahim Metwaly, human rights lawyer and co-founder of the Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group, who was detained on his way to Geneva to address the UN. Ibrahim Metwaly is held at the Badr Prison Complex in conditions that violate the absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment. He must be immediately and unconditionally released as he is being held solely due to the peaceful exercise of his human rights, including seeking truth and justice for his forcibly disappeared son.

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

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*Office of the Public Prosecutor*  
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Dear Counsellor,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the arbitrary detention of 58-year-old **Ibrahim Metwaly** who has been arbitrarily detained since 10 September 2017. Ibrahim Metwaly, a human rights lawyer and co-founder of the Disappeared in Egypt, was detained by Egyptian security forces at Cairo International Airport on his way to Geneva, where he was invited to meet with the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to address the issue of enforced disappearances in Egypt. After his detention, he was held incommunicado for two days until he appeared before the Supreme State Security Prosecutor (SSSP) in Cairo. During this period, he was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. He told his lawyers that National Security Agency (NSA) officers stripped him naked, gave him electric shocks in various parts of his body, doused him in water, and beat him. In June 2022, after five years in Tora Prison Complex, Ibrahim Metwaly was transferred to Badr 3 prison where he remains. According to Amnesty International's research, prisoners held in this prison often suffer from horrific and punitive conditions and are denied access to adequate healthcare. He suffers from chronic back pain.

Ibrahim Metwaly has remained in pre-trial detention since 2017 pending investigations into charges including of "founding and leading an illegal group", "conspiring with foreign parties to harm Egyptian national security", and "publishing false news." While the maximum period of pre-trial detention permitted according to Egyptian law is two years, authorities refused to release Ibrahim Metwaly and the SSSP opened two cases against him on similar charges to keep him in prolonged pre-trial detention.

**I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Ibrahim Metwaly as he is detained solely for peacefully exercising his human rights. Pending his release, he must be protected from torture and other ill-treatment, and have access to his family and lawyers.**

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ibrahim Metwaly is a lawyer and co-founder of the Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group. He co-founded the group after his son, Amr, was forcibly disappeared on 8 July 2013. He searched for his son in police stations, prisons, hospitals, and morgues with no success. Egyptian security forces [denied](#) knowledge of his son's whereabouts. Amr is still forcibly disappeared, but the family stopped searching for him after the arrest of Ibrahim Metwaly out of fear of further reprisals. On 12 September 2017, following his detention, the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) ordered the detention of human rights lawyer Ibrahim Metwaly for 15 days pending investigations into charges of founding and leading an illegal group, the "Families of the Disappeared in Egypt Group," "conspiring with foreign parties to harm Egyptian national security," and "publishing false news".

While Egyptian law imposes a maximum two-year pretrial detention period, this is routinely bypassed in cases involving state critics and political opponents through a practice known as "rotation". investigation. SSSP prosecutors opened investigations into new cases against Ibrahim Metwaly, case number 1470 of 2019 and case number 786 of 2020. There are concerns that SSSP prosecutors will once again open investigations into a new case against Ibrahim Metwaly in September 2023, when the two-year maximum detention period expires in his third case. This involves SSSP prosecutors opening new (bogus) cases, based on similar charges, against individuals whose release is forthcoming in an attempt to prolong their continued detention pending investigation. Despite the reactivation of the Presidential Pardons Committee in April 2022 and the launch of the National Dialogue in May 2023, the Egyptian authorities continue to arbitrarily detain critics solely for exercising their human rights, following grossly unfair trials.

Ibrahim Metwaly is currently held in [Badr 3 Prison](#), located 70 kilometres to the northeast of Cairo, where, according to Amnesty's research, prisoners complain of horrific and punitive conditions. His family is allowed to visit him every 45 days or two months. The visitors sit in a booth with glass partition which makes communication difficult due to the low volume of the phone. The family is also allowed to deliver food, clothing, and medical items every 30 days. Some of the items, that are usually allowed, are sometimes banned so that the family is unable to stipulate what exactly can and cannot be allowed to be delivered during visits. Amnesty International has previously documented the cruel and inhuman conditions in this prison. Former detainees and family members have spoken of heavily restricted access to basic necessities such as sufficient food, clothing and books. Authorities often/frequently? denied regular contact with their families or lawyers and detention renewal hearings are routinely held online which prevents the detainee from taking with the judge. [Leaked letters, from February 2022](#), by prisoners indicated deliberate denial of healthcare, exposure to extreme cold, and camera surveillance and bombardment with bright lights 24 hours a day. The letters mention that some detainees have attempted suicide and others went on hunger strike.

Amnesty International has documented a large number of cases of enforced disappearances which have plagued Egypt for the past decade. The National Security Agency (NSA) and other security forces routinely hold those accused of involvement in terrorism or protests incommunicado and deny any information about their fate and whereabouts to their relatives and lawyers, for periods ranging from a few days to 23 months. Egypt remains a non-signatory of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

### **PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic

You can also write in your own language.

### **PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 11 October 2023

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

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Ibrahim Metwaly (he/him)