

URGENT ACTION

DEFENDER AT RISK OF CONTINUED DETENTION IN EGYPT

The South Banha prosecutor renewed on 18 June the detention for human rights defender Hanan Badr el-Din for 15 more days. The defender has been detained since 6 May, while the prosecutor investigates her on charges of belonging to a banned group.

On 18 June, the prosecutor of South Banha renewed **Hanan Badr el-Din's** detention for a further 15 days, pending investigation. The activist who campaigns against enforced disappearances is under investigation for belonging to a banned group. Hanan Badr el-Din became an activist against enforced disappearance after her husband, Khalid Ezz el-Din, disappeared at a protest on 27 July 2013.

Hanan Badr el-Din was initially arrested on 6 May at Qanatar prison, north of Cairo, where she was visiting a detainee who had previously been subjected to enforced disappearance. The man eventually resurfaced in Qanatar prison, and Hanan Badr el-Din was taking this opportunity to visit and ask him if he had any information regarding her husband. Prison security detained her and confiscated her belongings, which included a handwritten piece of paper featuring information about her husband. They accused her of trying to smuggle the paper into the prison, as well as contraband including a flash drive – but the prosecutor did not pursue this charge.

According to her lawyer, prison security initially detained Hanan Badr el-Din in a cell from 2 pm to 5 am and she was interrogated by National Security Agency (NSA) officers. On 7 May, Hanan Badr el-Din was transferred to Qanatar police station and then to the South Banha prosecutor, who ordered her detention pending NSA investigations. On 8 May, the NSA report claimed that Hanan Badr el-Din was a member of the banned Muslim Brotherhood organisation. That same day prosecutors ordered that she be detained for 15 days so they could investigate the charge of belonging to a banned group. Amnesty International believes there is no basis for any of these charges and Hanan Badr el-Din is being targeted solely for defending the human rights of the forcibly disappeared in Egypt.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language urging the Egyptian authorities to:

- Not to renew the detention order and release Hanan Badr el-Din immediately and unconditionally, dropping all charges against her;
- Inform Hanan Badr el-Din without delay of the fate and whereabouts of Khaled Ezz el-Din, and similarly inform the families of all forcibly disappeared detainees in Egypt of the fate and whereabouts of their detained family member;
- Stop the use of enforced disappearance in Egypt, establish independent investigations into the practice, and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 JULY 2017 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor, Dar al-Qada al-Ali, Down Town
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +20225774716

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

Minister of Interior

Magdy Abdel Ghaffar
Ministry of the Interior
25 El Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 2 794 5529
Email: center@iscmi.gov.eg or
E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg
Twitter: @moiegy

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs

Laila Bahaa Eldin
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Corniche el-Nile, Cairo, Egypt.
Fax: +202 2574 9713
Email: contact.us@mfa.gov.eg
Twitter: @MfaEgypt

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR NASSER AHMED KAMEL ALI, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 26 South Street W1K 1DW, 020 7499 3304/2401, Fax 020 7491 1542, eg.emb.london@mfa.gov.eg and etembuk@hotmail.com. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hanan Badr el-Din is a human rights defender and co-founder of the Families of the Forcibly Disappeared Association. Hanan Badr el-Din became an activist after her husband, Khalid Ezz el-Din, disappeared at a protest on 27 July 2013. She last saw him that same day, on television, where she could see he was wounded and at a field clinic. However, when she went to the clinic, she was unable to find him. Since then, Hanan Badr el-Din has been continuously looking for her husband, inquiring as to his fate and whereabouts, in police stations, prisons, hospitals, and morgues. She has yet to learn any significant information.

During her search for her husband, Hanan Badr el-Din came into contact with other people who were also looking for their family members who have been subjected to enforced disappearance. In early 2014, the Families of the Forcibly Disappeared Association was then established in response to the proliferation of this practice, used as a tool by the Egyptian security forces, by those families of enforced disappearance. The group aims to determine the fates and whereabouts of their disappeared family members. Initially, the organisation focused on searching in police stations, prisons, hospitals, and morgues. By mid-2015, the group began to campaign publicly by directly addressing the government and calling on them to divulge the fates and whereabouts of the forcibly disappeared. They started to organize press conferences, media engagement and public rallies. These actions attracted more and more families of forcibly disappeared, and led them to unite their efforts in their search.

Amnesty International has extensively documented enforced disappearances in Egypt as a tool commonly used by security forces against political activists and protesters, including students and children. Hundreds of such people have been arbitrarily arrested and detained and subjected to enforced disappearance by state agents, with the authorities refusing to acknowledge their detention or refusing to give information about their fate or whereabouts. Those detained in this way did not have access to their lawyers or families and were held incommunicado outside judicial oversight. Egyptian NGOs allege that an average of three to four people are abducted and arbitrarily subjected to enforced disappearance each day. This pattern of violations has become particularly evident since March 2015 when President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi appointed Major-General Magdy Abd el-Ghaffar as Minister of Interior. See Amnesty international's report: 'Officially, you do not exist' – Disappeared and tortured in the name of counter-terrorism, 13 July 2016: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/4368/2016/en/>

Torture and other ill-treatment are often associated with enforced disappearance. Victims, including children, and their families told Amnesty International that NSA officers tortured and subjected them to other ill-treatment to force them to "confess" to crimes or implicate others. Such "confessions" were then used to justify their continued pre-trial detention and as evidence to obtain convictions at trial. In some cases, the NSA videotaped detainees' "confessions" and released them to local media.

Methods of torture reported by victims and witnesses include electric shocks to the body and sensitive areas, such as the genitals, lips and ears; prolonged suspension by the limbs while handcuffed and naked; and sexual abuse, including rape; beatings and threats. Some detainees said they were subjected to the "grill" – rotation on a bar that was inserted between their tied arms and legs and balanced between two chairs.

Egyptian authorities regularly deny the practice of enforced disappearances. Most recently, on 4 June, Alaa Abed, head of the Human Rights Committee in the Egyptian parliament stated that "enforced disappearances do not exist, and is instead a term coined by the Muslim Brotherhood and the fifth column", on "Parlmany" newspaper. In March 2016, the Egyptian Minister of Interior also said: "There is no enforced disappearance in Egypt, and the security forces operate within the legal framework". Egyptian human rights groups have challenged the Ministry of Interior's denials with hundreds of documented cases of enforced disappearance.

Name: Hanan Badr el-Din

Gender m/f: f

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