

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER MUST BE RELEASED

Ibrahim Metwaly, human rights lawyer and co-founder of the Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group, was detained on 10 September while on his way to Geneva to address the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. After being held incommunicado for two days by Egyptian security forces, the Prosecutor has now ordered his detention for a further 15 days, pending investigation.

On 12 September, the Supreme State Security Prosecution 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.” Ibrahim Metwaly is 52 years old and suffers from chronic back pain.

Ibrahim Metwaly was scheduled to fly to Geneva on 10 September at 9:45am, following an invitation from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to address the issue of enforced disappearances in Egypt. He arrived at the airport at 9:05am and was approached by a person claiming to work for EgyptAir who took him to an undisclosed location in the airport. Egyptian security forces detained him incommunicado for two days in an undisclosed location. He reappeared on 12 September before the Supreme State Security Prosecutor in Cairo. Police forces then raided his house in Kafr el-Sheikh city and ransacked it.

Among the evidence provided against Ibrahim Metwaly is an invitation letter issued by the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances. Amnesty International believes that the charges against Ibrahim Metwaly are completely unfounded and represent a reprisal against him due to peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association. This is the second time authorities have targeted a member of the Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group, following the arrest of Hanan Badr el-Din, the group’s other co-founder, on 20 May.

According to local human rights group, the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, security forces forcibly disappeared at least 165 people between January and August 2017.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English, or your own language:

- Urging the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ibrahim Metwaly as he is imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Calling on them to ensure that Ibrahim Metwaly is protected from torture and ill-treatment, and has access to his family and a lawyer of his choosing, and any medical treatment he requires;
- Calling on them to establish an independent and impartial investigation into allegations of enforced disappearances and sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 OCTOBER 2017 TO:

Minister of Interior
Magdy Abdel Ghaffar
Ministry of Interior
Fifth Settlement, New Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 2794 5529 +2027927189
Email: center@iscmi.gov.eg or
E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg
Twitter: @moiegy
Salutation: Dear Minister

President
Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2391 1441
Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg
Twitter: @AlsisiOfficial
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights
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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER MUST BE RELEASED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ibrahim Metwaly is a lawyer and co-founder of the Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group. He co-founded the group along with Hanan Badr el-Din, after his son, Amr was forcibly disappeared on 8 July 2013. He began to search for his son in police stations, prisons, hospitals, and morgues with no success. Egyptian security forces denied knowledge of his whereabouts.

Egyptian security forces arrested the group's other co-founder, Hanan Badr el-Din on 20 May 2017, and she remains in prison pending investigations. She was arrested in Qanatar prison, in Greater Cairo, while visiting a prisoner and former victim of enforced disappearance to ask him for information about her husband who has been forcibly disappeared since 27 July 2013. Prison security accused her of smuggling contraband, however the prosecutor dropped this charge and is instead investigating her for "belonging to a banned group." The prosecutor has since been renewing her detention every 15 days. She remains in prison since her arrest.

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 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 do not have access to their lawyers or families and are held incommunicado without judicial oversight. Egyptian NGOs allege that an average of three to four people are 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* (<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: threats and beatings; 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.

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 in *Parlmany* newspaper that "enforced disappearances do not exist, and is instead a term coined by the Muslim Brotherhood and the fifth column". 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.

Egypt is not a signatory to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

UA: 210/17 Index: MDE 12/7088/2017 Issue Date: 15 September 2017