

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED FOR ADDRESSING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Egyptian authorities ordered the pre-trial detention of woman human rights defender Amal Fathy, for a total of 30 days, after she posted a video on her Facebook page in which she shared her experience of sexual harassment and criticized the government over its failure to address the issue.

On 9 May, **Amal Fathy** posted a video on her Facebook page in which she shared her experience of sexual harassment, highlighted the prevalence of the issue in Egypt, and criticized the government's failure to protect women. She also criticized the government for the crackdown on human rights, socioeconomic conditions, and public services. The police raided Amal Fathy's home at around 2.30 AM on 11 May and then detained her at Maadi police station, Cairo, along with her husband – Mohamed Lotfy, former Amnesty International researcher and current director of the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), a human rights organization in Egypt – and their three-year-old child. Her husband and child were released three hours later.

On 11 May, the Maadi prosecutor examined Amal Fathy's case and ordered her detention for 15 days pending investigation on charges including "publishing a video that includes false news that could harm public peace". The next day, a Supreme State Security prosecutor interrogated her in another case about her alleged connection to the 6 April Youth Movement and ordered her detention for an additional 15 days pending investigations for belonging to a banned group in Egypt.

Online trolls copied the video and photos of Amal Fathy from her social media accounts and posted them on Facebook and Twitter pages, alongside gender-based insults and calls for her arrest. Several pro-government and state-owned media released articles about the video and falsely stated that she is a 6 April Youth movement activist, working at ECRF. They additionally published that she is married to the director of ECRF in violation of her privacy.

Amnesty International considers Amal Fathy to be a prisoner of conscience.

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

- Immediately and unconditionally release Amal Fathy as she is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully expressing her opinions;
- Recognize the legitimacy of the work of human rights defenders, like Amal Fathy, and in particular the right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 JUNE 2018 TO:

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

Public Prosecutor

Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor, Dar al-Qada al-Ali, Down Town
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2577 4716

Salutation: Dear Counsellor

And copies to:

Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Human Rights
Ahmed Ihab Gamal-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**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amal Fathy is an Egyptian activist who focuses mostly on raising awareness on the cases of people detained for their participation in protests or because of their social media activity. She has been vocal about human rights violations in Egypt, especially the arbitrary detention of activists. She is married to Mohamed Lotfy, former Amnesty International researcher, and the director of the NGO Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF).

ECRF staff members have been frequent targets of government harassment since its founding in 2014. In June 2015, Mohamed Lotfy was prevented from boarding a flight to Germany and the authorities confiscated his passport, without giving a clear reason. He was not issued with another passport for two years. The Egyptian authorities also arrested the board director of ECRF, Ahmed Abdallah, and Minorities program director, Mina Thabet, from their homes on 25 April and 19 May 2016 respectively. Prosecutors charged them with “membership in an illegal organization” and with “attempting to overthrow the government.” Egyptian authorities released Mina Thabet on 20 June and Ahmed Abdallah on 10 September 2016; both were released on bail. In July 2015, the authorities briefly detained four ECRF staff during a field mission in a slum in Cairo.

ECRF is well known for its work on the case of the Cambridge University student Giulio Regeni, who was abducted and killed in Egypt a year ago while doing research in the country. The 28-year-old Giulio Regeni went missing on 25 January 2016, while conducting research in Cairo for his PhD on trade unions. His badly mutilated body was found in a ditch on the outskirts of Cairo on 3 February 2016. Since early 2015, Amnesty International has recorded an unprecedented rise in cases of enforced disappearance and torture in Egypt. ECRF has been working on the case of Giulio Regeni and enforced disappearances, drawing the ire of the Egyptian authorities in the process.

Since November last year, the Egyptian authorities have been arresting activists, journalists, human rights defenders, and even social media figures over speech related offenses. In at least five different cases, Egyptian authorities have been holding them in pre-trial detention pending investigation over charges of “disseminating false news”, “misuse of social telecommunication tool”, and “belonging to a banned group”. These charges are usually supported only through national security agency’s investigations, and when evidence is found it is usually in the form of Facebook or Twitter posts.

There are two cases against Amal Fathy at the moment and they are exemplary of these new cases. The first one, in front of Maadi misdemeanor prosecution, sees Amal Fathy facing charges of “disseminating a video on social media to publicly incite overthrowing the government”, “publishing a video that includes false news that could harm public peace”, and “misusing telecommunication tools”. The second case is in front of the Supreme State Security Prosecution, where she faces charges of “belonging to a banned group”, “using a website to promote ideas calling for terrorist acts”, and “intentionally disseminating false news that could harm public security and interest”. The prosecutor did not provide any evidence and instead relied on the National Security Agency’s report, which the lawyers were not allowed to examine. Along with Amal Fathy, there are at least four more individuals, including a video producer, former politician from the liberal Dostour party, a blogger, and a 6 April Youth movement member, which is a youth activism movement that was central in the protests that led to ousting former President Hosni Mubarak back in 2011. Since 2013, the Egyptian authorities have been targeting its leadership with arrests and punitive probation measures.

Name: Amal Fathy
Gender m/f: f

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