

# URGENT ACTION

## DETAINED RESEARCHER IN CRITICAL CONDITION

Detained human rights researcher Ibrahim Ezz El-Din's health has deteriorated in Tora prison putting him at particular risk if exposed to COVID-19. Ibrahim remains in pre-trial detention following his arrest on 11 June 2019 and enforced disappearance for 167 days until his appearance in front of the Supreme State Security Prosecution on 26 November 2019.

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

**Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi**  
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Madinat al-Rehab  
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt  
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E-mail : [m.office@ppo.gov.eg](mailto:m.office@ppo.gov.eg)

Dear counsellor,

*Amid rising fears over the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Egypt's overcrowded prisons, the Egyptian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Ibrahim Ezz el-Din, particularly as he suffers from chronic allergies that cause respiratory difficulties. This condition puts him at particular risk to the virus according to the World Health Organisation's list of vulnerable groups. He should not be in detention in the first place. Generally, Ibrahim's poor health makes him more vulnerable to the effects of a virus like COVID-19. The well-documented concerns over overcrowded, unhygienic and unsanitary detention conditions in Egyptian prisons aggravate risks of the spread of COVID-19 infections.*

*On 20 February 2020, Ibrahim's lawyer submitted a request to the Supreme State Security Prosecution for Ibrahim, who had attempted suicide, to receive adequate psychiatric help from experts outside the prison with costs covered by his family. The authorities denied the request. On 26 February, Ibrahim attempted suicide again.*

*According to medical professionals familiar with Ibrahim's case, the systematic torture he endured while forcibly disappeared, in addition to systematic medical neglect by the Tora prison authorities, might have triggered his depression.*

*Ibrahim also suffers from an inflammation in his lumbar vertebrae, chronic allergies, and a fungal infection of the tongue developed due to poor conditions of detention. Ibrahim refuses to go to the prison hospital fearing infection after he heard that other prisoners have reportedly contracted hepatitis C while being treated there.*

***I urge you to release Ibrahim Ezz El-Din immediately and unconditionally given that his detention relates solely to his peaceful human rights work. As his health problems put him at increased risk from COVID-19, we call on you to ensure that, pending his release, he has access to adequate health care, including psychiatric services if needed. I also urge you to promptly undertake an effective investigation into his enforced disappearance and the alleged torture to which he has been subjected and bring to justice those suspected to be responsible in fair trials.***

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

*Ibrahim is a researcher at the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), where he focuses on the right to housing. On the night of 11 June 2019, plainclothes Egyptian security forces arrested Ibrahim. He was taken from the street near his Cairo home in the area of Moqattam and was forcibly disappeared for 167 days.*

*Ibrahim Ezz El-Din first appeared in front of a prosecutor on 26 November 2019. According to his lawyer, he appeared physically weak and had lost a considerable amount of weight. He told the prosecutor that he was tortured during his incommunicado detention to extract information about his relationship to the ECRF, and about the organization's work. He also complained about being held in inhumane and degrading conditions of detention at several security agency locations. Since then, the prosecutor has been extending his pre-trial detention every 15 days pending investigations.*

*He is the fifth person affiliated with the ECRF to have been arrested since 2016. His arrest follows the detention on 13 May 2019 of labour rights lawyer, Haytham Mohamdeen, who also works at ECRF, on trumped-up charges of "aiding a terrorist group". In May 2018, Egyptian security forces arrested Amal Fathy, a human rights defender and wife of the Executive Director of ECRF and former Amnesty International Researcher Mohamed Lotfy, over a video critical of the authorities' failure to address rampant sexual harassment. She was conditionally released in December 2018 and put under house arrest until 14 March 2020, when the Supreme State Security Prosecution lifted all precautionary measures imposed on her. In 2016, authorities had also arrested the ECRF Minorities Programme Director Mina Thabet and head of the board Ahmed Abdallah, before releasing them without charge.*

*Ibrahim Ezz El-Din has been unable to complete his master's thesis as scheduled in December 2019 given his arrest. While Ibrahim's lawyer obtained permission for Ibrahim to receive books in prison, he was prevented from writing his thesis by prison authorities.*

*Ibrahim's arrest came amid a human rights crisis in Egypt, characterized by a crackdown on independent civil society and arrests of hundreds of individuals over their legitimate work or peaceful expression or assembly. The crackdown has affected journalists, football fans, critics, politicians and staff of civil society organizations. Many of those arrested have been subjected to enforced disappearances, before being charged with unfounded "terrorism" charges and held in pre-trial detention for months, or even years, without trial (see [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/1399/2019/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/1399/2019/en/)).*

*Amnesty International has documented Egyptian security forces' use of enforced disappearances as a tool against political activists and protesters, including students and children in Egypt (see [www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/4368/2016/en/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/4368/2016/en/)). Hundreds of people forcibly disappeared were held with no access to their lawyers or families and no external judicial oversight. This pattern of abuse became particularly evident after President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi appointed Major-General Magdy Abd el-Ghaffar as Minister of Interior in March 2015. ECRF is one of the main Egyptian NGOs that has been working extensively on the issue of enforced disappearances.*

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

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 21 May 2020

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

**NAME AND PROFFERED PRONOUN:** Ibrahim Ezz El-Din (He/him)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/1502/2019/en/>

## ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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](mailto:p.spokesman@op.gov.eg)

Twitter: @AlsisiOfficial

Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Interior Mahmoud Tawfiq

Ministry of the Interior

25 El Sheikh Rihan Street

Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt

Fax: +202 2794 5529

Email: [center@iscmi.gov.eg](mailto:center@iscmi.gov.eg) or [E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg](mailto:E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg)

Twitter: @moiegy

Salutation: Dear Minister

### **And send copies to:**

His Excellency Mr Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel

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