



Dates for your diary	Wednesday 17/03/2021, 19:30 - 20:30 Human Rights in Egypt. Talk and Q&A, online (repeat session) Wednesday 07/04/2021, 19:30 - 20:30 Human Rights in Egypt. Talk and Q&A, online (repeat session) Saturday 19/06/2021: National Conference & AGM
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Dear writers,

A year on from the start of the first lockdown, and there are flickers of hope on the horizon. We may yet be able to have our Group AGM and even a Pumble later in the year. Here and now there are two bits of good news - the release of LOUJAIN AL-HATHLOUL in Saudi Arabia and a legal victory on Child Citizenship fees in the UK - see the back page. Over the past year many of us have had to get our heads around new technologies for working from home, and that includes our work for Human rights. Will we use these when Covid lockdowns are a bad memory?

Local events

Wednesday, 17/03/2021, 19:30 - 20:30 Online talk by Debora Singer, Egypt Country Co-ordinator AND

Wednesday 07/04/2021, 19:30 - 20:30 Online talk by Debora Singer, Egypt Country Co-ordinator

- Please note that these online sessions are a **repeat** of the February online event.
- This is an excellent chance to hear about the current human rights situation in Egypt and the launch of the new action, **The Keys to Freedom**, in support of **Ibrahim Ezz El-Din**, a housing rights activist in detention in Egypt. The latest action will focus on the symbol of keys to represent his interest in housing rights and to appeal for his release. **Debora has asked us all to bring key/keys to use at the meeting.**
- How to join the Zoom meeting: The session will take the form of a Zoom meeting, but don't worry if you are not familiar with Zoom: joining will be very straightforward. All you have to do is to email Margaret, our Group campaign co-ordinator, at mn_robertson@hotmail.com to let her know if you want to attend. Margaret will then email you a link to click on to join the meeting on 17 March or 7 April and the host will let you in. One click and you're in. It couldn't be simpler.

Other events

Tuesday 16/03/2021, 18:55 - 20:00 Save Our Human Rights Act panel. Join us online on Tuesday 16 March to hear from a range of panellists about the Human Rights Act, which is once again at risk. We'll be talking about why it's important, what's happening and what we can do. Speakers include Jamie Renton from Action Disability Kensington & Chelsea and Misha Nayak-Oliver from Just Fair. The event is free to attend but please do [register your place here](#).

Ends 23/04/2021. Poetry for Social Justice. Reading Amnesty Group is inviting entries to the UK-wide poetry competition, on the theme Social justice: human rights. There is one competition for 16-17 year olds and one for age 18 and over. For further information and to enter the competition, [visit this website](#)

Saturday 19/06/2021: The AGM (Annual General Meeting). The pandemic and its attendant restrictions have presented real challenges in deciding how to approach Amnesty's National Conference and Annual General Meeting and, based on feedback from the Board's Activism Sub Committee, Amnesty has decided to hold our AGM on 19 June as an online meeting, as we remain uncertain of the legal and health and safety restrictions that may continue to apply at that time. This year Amnesty plans to deliver all the AGM business elements across a single day: this will include presentations from the Chair, Treasurer and Director, as well as debates and voting on

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resolutions. Amnesty will be updating the web page <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/national-conference-and-agm> with dates, forms and further information.

Amnesty are also planning to deliver a form of National Conference in the autumn. It is still too early to say if this will be online, in person or a combination of the two but we will keep you updated with the plans as they develop.

Human Rights Defenders: Amnesty has launched an Amnesty UK **Brave** report *On the Human Rights Frontline – How the UK Government can defend the defenders* in February. It makes the case for a UK government strategy to improve support and protection for defenders and is centred on interviews with 82 Human Rights Defenders across seven countries, carried out or arranged by AIUK between June and October 2020. One of the standout quotes from the launch was from Nonoy Espina, Chair of the National Union of Journalists Philippines, who said “When they silence us, be our voice; when they attack us, be our shield; when they isolate us, stand by us”.

- It outlines the risks and threats HRDs are facing, but also recommendations for what the defenders themselves would like the UK to do to make sure that they are better protected and recognised for the important work that they do.
- It also draws on the experience of 12 other UK and international organisations with decades of experience of working with HRDs, including Peace Brigades International UK, The Law Society of England and Wales, Fund for Global Human Rights, Front Line Defenders and many others (the report has also been endorsed by a further 37 organisations).
- For the full report and country briefings visit: www.amnesty.org.uk/onthehumanrightsf frontline. Please also support and share the MP action putting pressure on the minister to act here: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/actions/uk-give-urgent-protection-frontline-human-rights-defenders>

Carry on writing!

Bob Dewick, Amnesty

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Amnesty action: campaigns & letter-writing

Action: Egypt Update

Our Campaign Co-ordinator Margaret advises:

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, Debora Singer will be repeating her online presentation regarding the human rights situation in Egypt on 17 March and 7 April, so please contact me if you would like to participate. Those of you who have already heard her talk will be all too aware of the dire current situation there, so you will not be surprised to hear that we have several urgent action appeals this month.

Action: Ramy Shaath

If you only have a few minutes to spare, you might like to sign the online petition on behalf of Ramy Shaath at <https://act.amnestyusa.org/page/76864/action/1>

Ramy Shaath has been detained since 2019 solely because of his peaceful campaigning as a human rights defender. Please note that you need to scroll down to specify you are in the U.K. (Outside the U.S.) before signing.



Action : Solafa Magdy, journalist, her husband, Hassam el-Sayed and a third journalist, Mohamed Saleh.

There is particular concern about Solafa who has been subjected to cruel and degrading treatment while in detention including threats and intimidation to extort a false confession.

Using the suggested template below, please either email

- Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi (m.office@ppo.gov.eg) and
- copy to H.E. Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel (egtamboff@gmail.com)

or write to them at

- Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi, Office of the Public Prosecutor, Madinat al-Rehab, Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt.
- HE Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel, Embassy of Arab Republic of Egypt, 26 South Street, London W1K 1DW

Action : Ahmed Samir Santawy

Ahmed Samir Santawy is a 29 year old researcher and academic who has been arbitrarily detained accused of spreading 'false news.' He alleges he has been ill treated while in detention and refused access to family and lawyers.

Please email or write to Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi and copy to HE Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel at the addresses above using the suggested template message below.

Thank you all for your continued support at such a difficult time.



Margaret Robertson, mn_robertson@hotmail.com

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To: Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi (m.office@ppo.gov.eg)
Copy to: HE Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel (egtamboff@gmail.com)

Dear Counsellor,

I am writing to you to raise serious concerns about alarming reports that arbitrarily detained journalist Solafa Magdy has been subjected to ill-treatment and possibly torture in al-Qanater Prison for women.

According to a complaint submitted by Solafa Magdy's lawyers, and reviewed by Amnesty International, during the 19 January 2021 court hearing, Solafa Magdy told the judge that at 11pm on 29 November 2020, three prison guards blindfolded her and took her outside her ward to a separate room to be interrogated by a man who did not identify himself. He sought to coerce her into becoming an informant, threatening her with not seeing her seven-year-old son again and harming her detained husband, journalist Hossam el-Sayed. Solafa Magdy also complained that her interrogator harassed her, without elaborating further. Amnesty International believes these acts may amount to torture. Solafa Magdy also recounted to the judge that prior to the hearing, she was strip searched in a violent manner by a female prison guard and forcibly dragged by a lower-ranking policeman from the prison to the vehicle used to transport prisoners to courts. Solafa Magdy also told the court that she was subjected to a forced pelvic examination on 30 August 2020, which led to heavy bleeding, particularly as she had previously undergone a uterine tumour removal operation.

Concerns about Solafa Magdy's health and well being were heightened following her mother's visit to prison on 27 January, when she appeared frail and unable to walk unsupported. She complained of bleeding.

Solafa Magdy has been arbitrarily detained since 26 November 2019, along with her husband Hossam el-Sayed, and journalist Mohamed Salah. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for carrying out their media work and for defending victims of human rights violations.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Solafa Magdy, Hossam el-Sayed and Mohamed Salah and to open a prompt, independent, impartial, and effective investigation into Solafa Magdy's complaints of ill-treatment possibly amounting to torture. Pending her release, she must be granted with regular access to adequate health care, including transfer to outside facilities for treatment unavailable inside prison.

Yours sincerely

To: Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi (m.office@ppo.gov.eg)
Copied to: HE Tarek Ahmed Ibrahim Adel, Ambassador (egtamboff@gmail.com)

Dear Counsellor,

I am writing to express concern about the arbitrary detention of 29-year-old researcher and anthropology master's student **Ahmed Samir Santawy**, pending investigations by the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP).

Ahmed Samir Santawy was arrested on 1 February after he had presented himself at the office of the National Security Agency (NSA), a specialized police force, in New Cairo, in response to a verbal summon. He was subjected to enforced disappearance until 6 February, when he was brought to the SSSP for questioning. He told the prosecutor that during this period he was held without access to his family or lawyer in three separate locations. He said he was blindfolded and punched in the head and stomach during questioning at the NSA office in the Fifth Settlement Police Station. NSA interrogators focused on his studies and involvement in an anti-government Facebook page. The prosecutor failed to order investigations into his allegations of being forcibly disappeared and beaten, and instead questioned him about this academic work and ordered his detention for 15 days pending investigations into charges of "membership in a terrorist group", "spreading false news" and "using a social media account to spread false news" in Case No.65/2021. The SSSP based its accusations on a Facebook post deemed critical of the authorities that Ahmed Samir Santawy denied authoring, as well as an

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investigation file prepared by the NSA, which Ahmed Samir Santawy and his lawyers were not allowed to review. Amnesty International considers **Ahmed Samir Santawy** to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely because of his academic interests and research focusing on gender and religion.

Ahmed Samir Santawy is currently held at Liman Tora Prison in the south of Cairo, without access to his family or lawyers. His detention without contact with the outside world raises concerns about his health and wellbeing, particularly given COVID-19 outbreaks in prisons, coupled with the lack of adequate medical care. He also has a history of mental health concerns, which may be exacerbated in prison particularly in the absence of adequate mental health care.

I therefore ask you to immediately and unconditionally release **Ahmed Samir Santawy** and open a prompt, independent, impartial, and effective investigation into his allegations of being forcibly disappeared and beaten. Pending his release, he must be granted immediate and regular access to his family and lawyers, provided with adequate health care and protected from torture and ill-treatment.

Yours sincerely,

Want to do more?

Please take a look at the current Urgent Actions <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/urgent-actions>: cases can be sent by email or by post.

Update: Saudi Arabia - Saudi activist released

Thank you for taking action in the past for **Loujain Al-Hathloul** and the 12 other women's rights activists who were imprisoned for peacefully campaigning for women's right to drive in Saudi Arabia. Further to the information we shared in the January 2021 Newsletter, we are delighted to be able to pass on some good news: Loujain Al-Hathloul has been released.



So many activists at AIUK have worked so hard on her case over the years and it was just so great to see her sister's tweet saying that Loujain is "at home after 1001 days in prison". Loujain al-Hathloul was arrested in May 2018 as part of a major crackdown on women's rights activists in Saudi Arabia after she had actively campaigned for Saudi women to be able to drive.

Of course, while it is an incredible relief, and long overdue, her treatment in jail was horrendous. Nothing can make up for the cruel treatment she has suffered, nor the injustice of her imprisonment. We will of course continue to campaign for women's rights in Saudi Arabia.

Good News on child citizenship fees

The Court of Appeal has upheld the ruling of the High Court that the £1,012 fee the Home Office charges children to register as a British citizen is unlawful. The current administrative processing cost of a child's registration as a British citizen is only £372. The Home Office uses the remaining £640 profit to cross-subsidise the immigration system. This month's judgment again requires the Home Office to reconsider the fee and ensure that children's best interests are taken fully into account in doing so.

This has been a very effective campaign by AIUK's Children's Human Rights Network working with the Programme Director for Refugees and Migrants and The Project for the Registration of Children as British Citizens (PRCBC). We continue to call for the following:

- Remove any element of the registration fee over and above the actual cost of administration
- Exempt the entire fee in the case of children in local authority care
- Introduce a waiver of the fee in the case of any child who is unable to afford the administrative cost of registration.

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