

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER RELEASED

On 17 July, the Egyptian authorities provisionally released journalist and human rights defender **Esraa Abdelfattah** but the investigation against her remains open. **Esraa Abdelfattah** had been arbitrarily detained since 12 October 2019, solely for the peaceful exercise of her human rights.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

On 17 July, the Egyptian authorities released journalist and human rights defender **Esraa Abdelfattah** from the National Security Agency (NSA) headquarters in Abbasseya, Cairo. She had spent 21 months in arbitrary pretrial detention in Qanater women prison, stemming solely from the peaceful exercise of her human rights. She was released provisionally pending investigations into two separate criminal cases.

Esraa Abdelfattah's health had deteriorated in detention. She had been taken to al-Qanater Prison hospital in August 2020 after suffering a haemorrhage and suffered from irregular blood pressure and breathing difficulties that required oxygen therapy. The Egyptian authorities denied that her health was deteriorating inside prison and that she had been hospitalized. After her release, Esraa Abdelfattah started suffering from shingles, a skin rash, as a result of poor conditions in detention.

Esraa Abdelfattah had been detained since her abduction by security forces in plain clothes on 12 October 2019. She was held for eight hours at an undisclosed location managed by the NSA, a specialized police force, during which time she said she was tortured and otherwise ill-treated. She was subsequently transferred to the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP), a special branch of the prosecution responsible for investigating security threats, which ordered her detention in relation to investigations in case No. 488/2019 over unfounded charges of "joining a terrorist group in achieving its goals", "disseminating false news" and "misusing social media." On 30 August 2020, Esraa Abdelfattah was interrogated by the SSSP in relation to a new case (No. 855/2020) over similar bogus accusations in addition to "joining a terrorist organisation."

Esraa Abdelfattah, who played a prominent role in the 25 January 2011 uprising, has been banned from travel since January 2015 in relation to the NGO foreign funding case known as "Case 173", or the "foreign funding" case. At least 30 other human rights workers continue to be subjected to travel bans, asset freezes, and criminal investigations as part of "Case 173".

Amnesty International members and supporters signed petitions and sent letters to the Egyptian authorities calling for Esraa Abdelfattah's release. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation, and campaign for the release of all those detained solely for peacefully exercising their human rights, and for an end to the crackdown on the human rights movement in Egypt, including calling for the closure of criminal investigations and the lifting of travel restrictions and asset freezes against human rights workers.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Esraa Abdelfattah (she/her)

THIS IS THE SECOND AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 145/20

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/3095/2020/en/

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