

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER RELEASED

After 22 months of arbitrary pretrial detention, the Egyptian authorities provisionally released human rights lawyer and activist Mahienour el-Masry on 18 July, pending investigations into bogus accusations of publishing “false news” and involvement in terrorism-related offences.

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

On 18 July, human rights lawyer and activist **Mahienour el-Masry** was released from the Cairo headquarters of the National Security Agency (NSA), a specialized police force. She spent 22 months in arbitrary pretrial detention in al-Qanater Prison for women in relation to two separate cases, both stemming from the peaceful exercise of her human rights. The investigations against her remain open as per documented practice in Egypt in cases of a political nature, whereby prosecutorial authorities rarely, if ever, formally close investigations.

Mahienour el-Masry had been arbitrarily detained since her arrest by security forces on 22 September 2019 in the context of the post-September 2019 anti-government protest crackdown. The Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) initially questioned her in relation to Case No. 488/2019 over unfounded charges of “aiding a terrorist group in achieving its goals” and “spreading false news”. On 30 August 2020, Mahienour el-Masry was interrogated by the SSSP in relation to a new case (No. 855/2020) over similar terrorism-related accusations.

Mahienour el-Masry is a prominent human rights lawyer in Alexandria and a recipient of several international human rights awards. Since 2014, Mahienour el-Masry has been in and out of detention multiple times in connection to her human rights activism or the legitimate exercise of her rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

Public pressure contributed to her release. Amnesty International members and supporters around the world signed petitions and sent letters to the Egyptian authorities to call for her immediate and unconditional release. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the situation and respond to developments as relevant. The organization will also continue to call for the releases of the thousands of human rights defenders, lawyers, journalists, scholars, artists and others who remain detained arbitrarily in Egypt pending investigations into bogus terrorism-related charges or following grossly unfair proceedings.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mahienour el-Masry (she/her)

THIS IS THE FOURTH AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 131/19

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/3038/2020/en/

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