

Egypt's Anatomy of Repression Against Human Rights Defenders



UNJUST PROSECUTIONS & UNFAIR TRIALS

🔍 Unfair trials and convictions to lengthy prison terms, including by inherently unfair emergency courts, military courts, and terrorism-circuits of regular criminal courts.

⚠️ Criminalises human rights work on bogus “terrorism”-related charges.

MOAZ AL-SHARQAWI

A former student union leader, faced relentless and unjust prosecution for nearly seven years due to his student activism, repeatedly being charged with fabricated “terrorism” offenses. He was unjustly handed a second ten-year prison sentence in June 2025, following an initial ten-year sentence received in 2022, with both stemming from his activism. Furthermore, he is currently awaiting a third sentence in connection to a third case on similar charges.



ARBITRARY/PROLONGED DETENTION

🔍 Systematic use of prolonged arbitrary pretrial detention without charge or trial.

⚠️ Enables indefinite detention to silence defenders and deter others from activism

MARWA ARAFA

Detained in Egypt since 2020 and held over five years without trial, far exceeding the two-year legal limit for pretrial detention. Authorities have repeatedly renewed her detention without legal basis, violating due process. She was referred to trial in December 2024 on unfounded charges of "joining and financing a terrorist group".

At her resumed trial in October 2025, she appeared in court severely unwell, reporting a suspected pulmonary embolism.

ARBITRARY/PROLONGED DETENTION



🔍 The tactic of "rotation" is used to keep detainees imprisoned by immediately charging them with new, but similar, offenses after a release order or an acquittal.

⚠️ Enables indefinite detention to silence defenders and deter others from activism

NERMIN HUSSEIN

A political activist who has been held in arbitrary pretrial detention for over 6 years on unfounded charges of "spreading false news" and "joining a banned group". Despite a release order in January 2021, authorities immediately subjected her to the "rotation" tactic accusing her of similar new charges in a new case.

CRUEL DETENTION CONDITIONS

-  Widespread inhumane detention conditions in Egypt —including overcrowding, unsanitary facilities, poor nutrition, denial of family and lawyers' visits, prolonged solitary confinement, and deliberate medical neglect
-  Punish defenders and detainees in politically motivated cases.

HODA ABDEL-MONEIM

A human rights lawyer arbitrarily detained since 2018, has been systematically denied adequate medical treatment despite suffering from heart attacks, kidney failure, deep vein thrombosis, hypertension, and immobility.

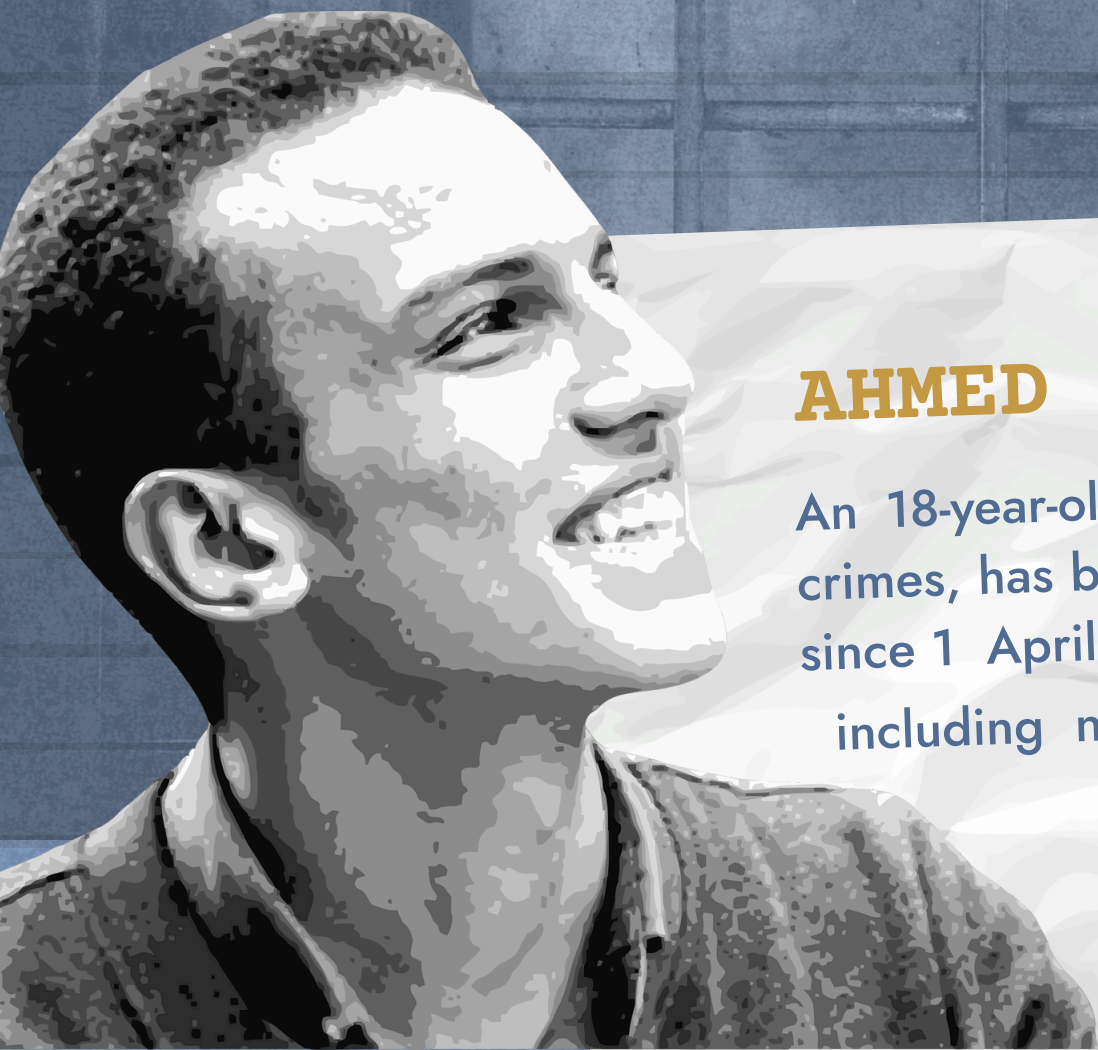
ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE



Secret detention by the National Security Agency (NSA) - which specialises in policing terrorism and political cases - concealment of whereabouts, denial of communication or access to lawyers and families.



Facilitates torture and other ill-treatment, creates fear, removes legal protection.



AHMED HASSAN MUSTAFA

An 18-year-old law student at the time of the alleged crimes, has been forcibly disappeared for over six years since 1 April 2019. Despite numerous legal actions, including numerous complaints and a court ruling in 2020 demanding the Ministry of Interior to disclose his whereabouts, the Ministry of Interior failed to provide any information.

TORTURE & ILL-TREATMENT



Beatings, electric shocks, stress positions, sexual violence, prolonged solitary confinement and deliberate denial of adequate medical care.



Inflicts severe physical and psychological trauma, sometimes resulting in death, and is used to extract torture-tainted 'confessions' and/or to punish, intimidate, or coerce



SOUMAYA MAHER

An activist who supported political detainees and was held in solitary confinement for over nine months in a General Intelligence facility, including more than two months of enforced disappearance. According to her lawyer, she was subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including constant surveillance, forced standing for long hours, psychological intimidation, and harsh detention conditions with inadequate food and no access to a toilet. She was denied family visits and private meetings with her lawyer. These abuses caused in severe physical and psychological harm. After four years of arbitrary pre-trial detention, she was referred to trial in 2021 and remains awaiting sentencing.

ARBITRARY SUMMONS & HARASSMENT



Authorities routinely interrogate activists and civil society workers about their human rights work and political views, including their social media posts, and in some cases pressure them to act as informants.



Harass and intimidate human rights defenders into silence.



MAHINOOR ELMASRY

A prominent human rights lawyer and activist, has been repeatedly imprisoned for her human rights and political activism. In August 2025, she was summoned for interrogation by Egypt's Supreme State Security Prosecution, reflecting a continuation of harassment against her. The summons targeted her public statements in relation to detention conditions.



ARBITRARY INCLUSION ON "TERRORIST LISTS"

- 🔍 Inclusion on "Terrorist Lists" via secret NSA investigations, without trial or right to appeal.
- ⚠️ Imposes strict penalties, including travel bans, asset freezes, and bans on public or political participation for up to five years.

MOHAMED EL-BAQER

A human rights lawyer and founder of the Adalah Centre for Rights and Freedoms, was arbitrarily detained in 2019 and unjustly sentenced to four years in prison. Although pardoned and released in 2023, he remains unjustly listed as a "terrorist."

TRAVEL BANS & ASSET FREEZES

-  Bans on travel, freezing of personal and NGO assets; financial surveillance.
-  Restrict individuals' movement, constrain NGOs' work, and hamper their operations.

GASSER ABDELRAZIK, MOHAMED BASHEER, AND KARIM ENNARAH

Three EIPR directors detained in November 2020 and released following international pressure — have now spent five years under travel bans and asset freezes.



TRANSNATIONAL REPRESSION



Harassment of exiled HRDs, denial of passports, intimidation of families inside Egypt.



Extends repression beyond borders, deters advocacy and human rights work outside Egypt

OQBA HASHAD

A student with a disability, has been arbitrarily detained for more than six years, including nine days of enforced disappearance, in direct reprisal for his brother's activism. Despite a court order for his release in 2024, Oqba was instead "rotated" into a new case with fabricated charges before being referred to trial in October 2025. He was denied medical care, including medication and a prosthetic leg essential for his mobility for over six years in detention.

SMEAR CAMPAIGNS & THREATS

- 🔍 State-aligned media and intermediaries defame HRDs as “traitors” or “foreign agents.”
- ⚠️ Delegitimise defenders’ work, incite hostility, and trigger reprisals.

AHMED SALEM

Head of Sinai Foundation for Human Rights, smeared and threatened after reporting on abuses in Sinai in 2024.