

## JOINT STATEMENT

### Egypt: Reprisal Against Award-Winning Actors Amr Waked and Khaled Abol Naga for Speaking Out Against Repression

April 2, 2019 - Washington, D.C. — We, the undersigned organizations strongly condemn the Egyptian authorities' retaliation and intimidation of Amr Waked and Khaled Abol Naga following their participation in a series of human rights advocacy activities in Washington D.C. In addition, we call on the Egyptian government to halt all reprisals and persecution of human rights defenders and independent NGOs.

On March 24th and 25th Amr Waked and Khaled Abol Naga joined over 100 Egyptians and Egyptian Americans from over 25 states and 6 countries for 200 meetings with members of the US Congress and State Department during the "Egypt Advocacy Day." The event was organized by the Freedom Initiative and sponsored by prominent human rights organizations. The aim of this day was to raise awareness about the proposed constitutional amendments in which, if passed, would undermine the rule of law in Egypt by enshrining impunity for members of the armed forces, undermining judicial independence, expanding military trials for civilians and expanding executive powers. By participating in the Egypt Advocacy Day, Mr. Waked and Mr. Naga exercised their legitimate right to speak out against the Egyptian government's dismal human rights record and in their call for solidarity against repression.

In response, the Egyptian authorities have unleashed a systematic media demonization and defamation campaign against some of those who participated in the meetings, particularly Waked and Naga. Government, as well as privately owned newspapers defamed them, through labelling them as "terrorists" and "traitors" and used homophobic language against them. A member of parliament has called on the government to strip their Egyptian nationality and try them for treason, along with other opponents to the constitutional amendments. The Egyptian Actors Syndicate announced that it expelled the two actors on grounds of treason through a public statement, citing "their reliance on foreign powers to conspire against Egypt's security and stability". These actions further demonstrate the length to which Egyptian authorities are willing to go to silence human rights defenders and influential voices of reason. Mr. Waked has earlier stated that two military courts have sentenced him to a total eight years in prison for "disseminating false information" and "insulting the state's institutions" and the Egyptian embassy refused to renew his passport.

These harassment and defamation campaigns against Mr. Waked and Mr. Naga are part of a larger atmosphere of unprecedented repression of the most basic rights and freedoms. These extreme measures are scare tactics aimed at raising the price of peaceful activism and protest, even when it occurs outside of Egypt.

We stand in solidarity with Amr Waked and Khaled Abol Naga and all Egyptians who peacefully express their opinions against all odds. We urge the Egyptian government to respect its obligations under international human rights treaties and the Egyptian constitution, end the crackdown on critics and human rights defenders and halt the persecution of activists including Mr. Waked and Mr. Naga.

Signed



AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



POMED PROJECT  
ON MIDDLE EAST  
DEMOCRACY



human rights *first*  
American ideals. Universal values.

FRONT LINE  
DEFENDERS

The Freedom Initiative