

Engy Fouda Capstone Portfolio
Spring 2018

Political Detainees in Egypt



Credit: Rommel Canlas/Shutterstock.com

Prisoner Number 30

The enforced
Disappearance
calamity in Egypt

Frame-up in Egypt

A system of false
incriminations

The Medical Negligence in Egypt Prisons

Detainees die by hanging
and medical negligence

Journalists' repression in Egypt

Journalism is not a
crime

Executing the political opponents

"Capital punishment must
stop because trials in Egypt
do not meet the standards of
fairness and due process."

Biography

Engy Fouda is originally from Egypt. She holds a bachelor and master's degrees in computer engineering from Cairo University. Currently, she pursues a master's degree in journalism at Harvard Extension School. She moved to the United States from about 13 years. Inspired by journalists' role in the Egyptian revolution in 2011, Fouda volunteered as editor-in-chief of an online Arabic magazine for three years. Moreover, she is an author of several books which made best-selling charts on Amazon for Arabic category. Many of the face-to-face and voice interviews in this project were conducted electronically. The sources are people who are whether living in Egypt in the current climate of fear and injustice or fled out of repression after facing horrific experiences.

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Prisoner Number 30

The enforced disappearance calamity in Egypt

NEW YORK -- Mahdi Elian, who was detained at age 14 and enforced disappeared for 100 days to appear crying and shaking in a courthouse cage a few days after his 15th birthday as the only child in the cage with many other adults.

Mahdi's attorney, Islam Salama, said in a telephone interview that while Mahdi was sobbing, he asked to see his mother and father.

Salama said he spoke to his parents only once on the phone. They said they did not have the financial ability or the guarantee of personal safety to travel from Sinai to Cairo as the mother did not have a personal ID.

Hence, they expect they would be detained as well if they left Sinai, he said.

According to the United Nations Committee on Enforced Disappearance [website](#), the definition of "enforced disappearance" is an

arrest, detention, abduction carried out by state officers and agents to places outside the protection of the law. Moreover, the detention is followed either by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate of the disappeared person.

Enforced Disappearance is arrest by officers outside law followed by denying the detention.

"It is illegal to detain a child younger than 15 years old," said Salama, a human rights attorney in Cairo who said he has been working to release women and children.

When Salama saw how Mahdi was terrified and in solitude in the cage, he walked up to the judge and said, "I'll defend this child."

Salama said Mahdi was born on June 5, 2001, and was detained near his home on June 27, 2016.

[Police record document shows that Mahdi Elian birth date as Jun. 5, 2001, his address, the case number as 452/2016, and his charge as a member of a terrorist organization. The document says that there was not any properties or evidence found with him.](#)

Salama said that the judge thought that Mahdi was the son of one of the adult defendants in the cage, and the guard had allowed him in. “The judge yelled at the guard for allowing a child to enter the cage to visit his father. The guard answered that this child is one of the defendants in the case,” Salama said.

The national security forces accused Mahdi of joining the Sinai State/ISIS, committing terroristic actions, obtaining military secrets, possessing explosives, and murdering an officer.

Mahdi’s disappearance is one of the thousands that have increased tremendously in Egypt since the coup in 2013, according to human rights groups.

Human rights groups say these enforced disappearances are not in prisons where treatment of detainees would be subject to more scrutiny. Instead, they are held secluded outside judicial oversight to appear later charged with terrorism accusations

based upon the detainees’ confessions under torture.

Moreover, these arrests are done without a trial, and the detainees are denied access to any lawyers or family during the disappearance periods.

An example, which drew international attention on Jan. 23, is the kidnapping and enforced disappearance of former Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces and presidential candidate, [Sami Anan](#), has terrified Egypt’s public. Moreover, some died in custody as in the case of [Giulio Regeni](#), an Italian Cambridge University graduate who was abducted and tortured to death.

Egyptians said that the disappearance of Anan was terrifying because he is perceived as one of the most influential leaders in the country. Hundreds of wary tweets posted by the public calling Egypt the “republic of fear.”



Hassan Nafaa @hassanafaa · Feb 5

إذا كان الدكتور سمير سامي عنان قد ارتكب مخالفة تستحق العقاب فلماذا لم يحاسب من قبل؟ الكل يدرك أنه عوقب بسبب إقدام الوالد على الترشح. الرئيس السابق لأركان جيش مصر العظيم يقبع في غياهب السجن، وابنه يتعرض للتشريد. يريد النظام لمصر أن تتحول إلى "جمهورية الخوف". لكن هيهات!

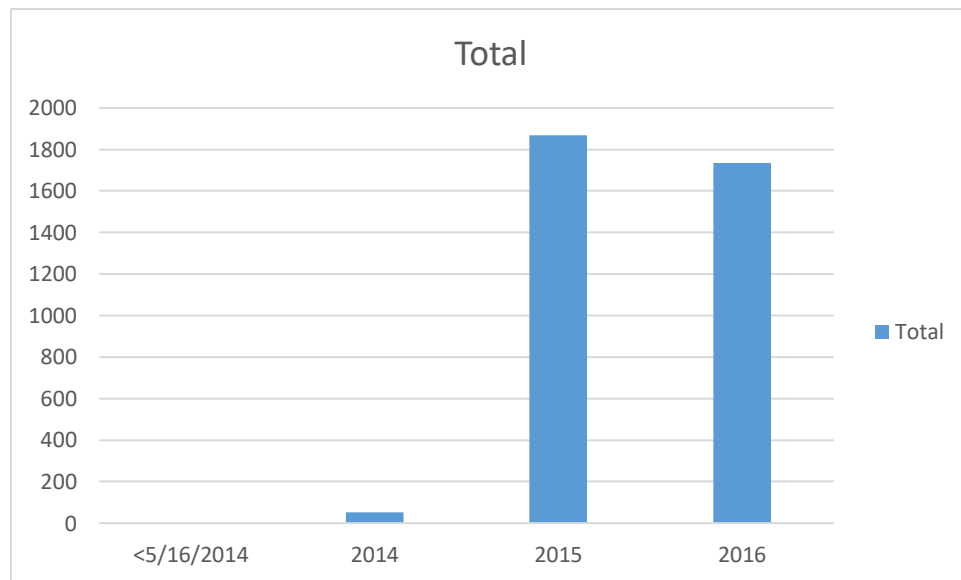
🌐 Translate from Arabic

💬 51 ↺ 177 ❤️ 747 ✉️

One of the tweets says: "If Dr. Samir Sami Annan committed a deserving offense punishment, why was he not held accountable before? Everyone realizes that he was punished because the father ran. The former head of Egypt's great army is in jail, and his son is being displaced. The regime wants Egypt to become a 'republic of fear.' But this won't happen."

In 2016, around 1735 victims including children younger than 15 years old, and in 2015, more than 1840 were recorded as enforced disappearances cases according to a [report](#) published on March 26, 2017, by The [Egyptian Coordination for Human](#)

[Rights and Freedoms](#). Most of these victims are university students, according to the report.



A stark increase in the number of enforced disappearances in the past two years. Source: The [Egyptian coordination for Human Rights and freedoms](#) and the [United Nations Human Right Council](#)

The United Nations Human Right Council assigned the Committee on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance to oversee the enforced disappearances and prisons. The committee has requested from the Egyptian government to allow it to inspect the

facilities, where people are being held annually since 2011. It sent six reminders within six years. However, the government ignored the requests, according to the United Nations 2017 [report](#).



Before his arrest, Youssef Eldemoky protested calling for the judiciary purging. Eldemoky provided the photo.

Mahdi's attorney, Salama, said that Mahdi is not permitted to talk to the press. Youssef Eldemoky, whom the Egyptian National Security Agency (NSA) started questing when he was at the same age as Mahdi, is now a 20-year-old university student and poet who fled to Turkey after his release from detention, he said in a video [interview](#) via Zoom.

Eldemokey said he was 14-year-old when he was severely injured during the 2013 Rabaa Al Adwaia sit-in. The New York Times said in a Nov. 14, 2013 [article](#), that hundreds of people were killed when the security forces quashed the sit-in.

Since that day, he said he has never returned to his house because the national security stalked him for three years until they detained him at the age of 17.

“You have no name here. Your name is prisoner number 30.”

Eldemoky said that the officers in the Egyptian detention center underground in the national security building at Al Sheikh Zayed, about nine miles from Giza, told him, “You have no name here. Your name is prisoner number 30.”



Eldemoky's mother on his release from prison. Eldemoky provided the photo.

Eldemoky said officer would punish severely for owning a Quran book. “Praying is forbidden. I prayed with my eyes only while being blindfolded,” Eldemoky said.

Eldemoky said that he thought of suicide after some torture sessions in the underground floors of the national security

office in ElSkeikh Zayed. However, he could not even do that because he was blindfolded and handcuffed.

Security officers used electric shocks on his chest and genital, hanging, slapping, and punching, he said.



To watch the video interview with Youssef Eldemoky via Zoom, click [here](#).

When he was in prison, Eldemoky made sketches of the types of torture that he experienced in the national security underground facility. He said that he was

scared that if the drawing spread, they would return him to the national security and would be enforced disappeared one more time merely for revenge.



Youssef Eldemoky's injuries clarify on the breaking day of Rabaa Aldawia's sit-in. Eldemoky said that some of his friends thought he died. Eldemoky provided the photo.

Dalia Lotfy, an international attorney and a human rights advocate at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, said in a telephone interview, some national human rights organizations do not submit the cases internationally which makes the plight worse.

According to the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) [procedures](#), if the national organizations submitted the urgent appeal [form](#) of the enforced disappearance, the UNHRC would contact the Minister of Foreign Affairs to reply with the location of the enforced disappeared person.

Lotfy said, "Minister of Foreign Affairs must reply the UNHRC within 48 hours with the location of the enforced disappeared person."

Salma Elkheshen, an independent human rights activist, specializing in documenting the women's cases, said in a telephone interview, she decided to document the cases independently because she had a negative experience volunteering with some national human rights organizations. They do not share the information of the case with other human rights agencies and act as if they owe the information exclusively, she said.

Not only children and men are being detained but also the female detainees' number is in a stark increase. Elkheshen said that children suffer even more when both their parents are enforced disappeared then arrested.

Elkheshen said the interior ministry is censoring the Internet in Egypt. "Most of the women's accusations are social media and Internet-related. For example, managing Facebook pages and communication."

ElKheshen said that a typical detainment is for example what happened with Hanan Badreldin, a woman who was searching for her disappeared husband for more than five years and managed a campaign called: "Stop the Enforced Disappearance."

ElKheshen said Badreldin was detained on May 6, 2017, while asking about her husband in one of the prisons. Currently, she faces charges of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Although some women are not accused of crimes, they are detained to be used as a threat to male family members, Elkheshen said. For example, that when the Egyptian security forces in Alexandria could not arrest a young man, they detained his mother as a way to force the man to agree to be detailed by the national security forces, she said.

The disappearance and torture that women experience have other ugly facets. Sherouk Sallam, an attorney, said in a telephone interview that women are exposed to harsh treatments in detention. She said she accompanied an accused woman, Ola Hussein, before her public prosecution.

Hussein is the lady that al-Sisi mentioned in his [speech](#) after the Cathedral explosion incident.

However, there is no evidence against Hussein, and her charge is joining the Muslim Brotherhood, Sallam said.

Ola Hussein's indictment documents ([doc1](#), [doc2](#)) stating that her charge was belonging to Muslim Brotherhood only.

Hussein was third-month pregnant when she was arrested and enforced disappeared on the day of the explosion. Sallam, Hussein's former attorney, said Hussein's case was switched from a civil to a military case and no visits, medication, clothes or food are allowed.

Sallam said, "In this severe cold, she was shivering from cold as she was only wearing very light prison garment. The keeper ordered her and another prisoner, who has cancer, to hold water containers on their heads several times and to sweep the prison cells floors." The water containers were

intended to spill on the poorly clothed women in the unheated detention at about 32 °F.

Despite the detention center maltreatment, she survived, as did her baby. She had been continuously at risk of miscarrying the baby as she bled many times throughout her detention.

Hussein and her husband were sentenced to death on April 10, 2018, leaving a baby and two girls, said Elkheshen in a Facebook [post](#).

The Medical Negligence in Egypt's Prisons

Detainees in Egypt die by hanging and medical negligence



A screenshot from Osama Sayed's trial via a YouTube [video](#)

NEW YORK -- A YouTube [video](#) went viral showing a courtroom in Egypt, seven soldiers, and officers wearing black surround a completely disabled 35-year-old man, Osama Sayed, wearing white and sitting on a chair. One of the soldiers got the wheelchair from the cage, but a higher rank officer ordered two soldiers to hold the chair instead and to carry the disabled accused man in front of the judge.

Osama Sayed's brother, Ashraf Sayed, said in a telephone interview in February 2018,

Osama Sayed was shot in his neck during an armed robbery, in 2005, which caused a fracture of the vertebrae and paralysis from neck down.

On the [Matariya violence](#) day, Jan. 25, 2015, Osama Sayed was at a hospital in Matariya, a district in the northern region of Greater Cairo. He went for a check-up to extract a medical proof of his disability to be qualified for getting a 5 percent job chance which the government provided for people with special needs, said Ashraf Sayed.

The security forces detained Osama Sayed with all the other patients who were at the Matariya Hospital as injured demonstrators, Ashraf Sayed said.

“Osama Sayed’s faces 15 to 20 charges including rioting, resisting powers, and intimidation of citizens,” Ashraf Sayed said.

Ashraf Sayed said his brother is unjustly incarcerated in harsh conditions and never had his required treatment sessions.

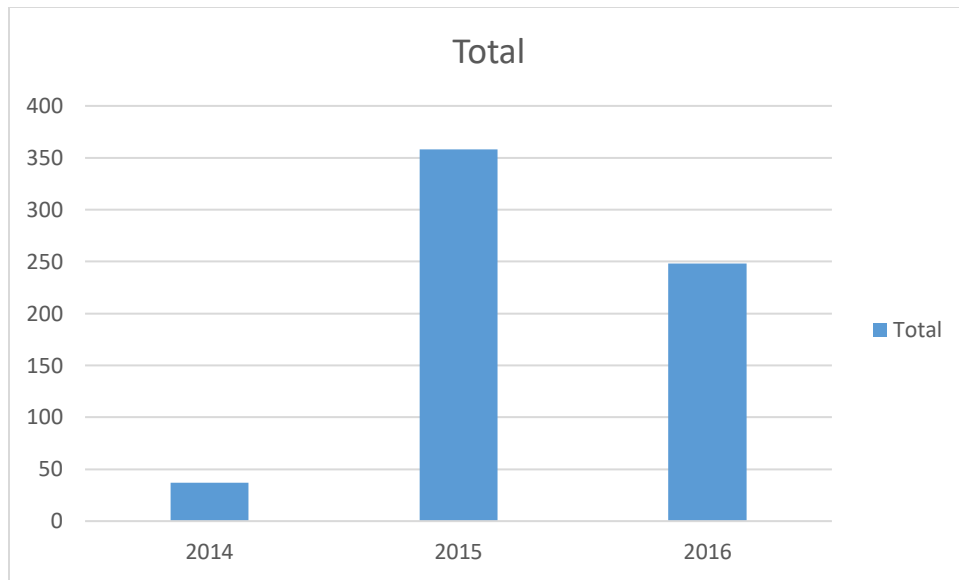
“After being prohibited from medication and the fundamental health care, Osama’s health deteriorated severely,” Ashraf Sayed said. Due to the severe medical negligence, Osama Sayed contracted new diseases in

“The violations of the right to health, unnecessary pain and suffering caused by the delay in the treatment amount to torture.”

detention including a liver infection which caused general weakness and made him in dire need of specialized medical treatment, Ashraf Sayed said.

Osama Sayed is one of the hundreds of Egyptians who recently been subjected to medical negligence in prisons in Egypt. The violations of the right to health, unnecessary pain and suffering caused by the delay in the treatment amount to torture, according to the Human Rights Watch [report](#).

According to [Al Nadeem Center](#) for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence [database](#), there are 358 cases of medical negligence in 2015 and 248 cases in 2016 in Egyptian detention facilities.



The number of medical negligence cases in Egyptian detention facilities, according to Al Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence [database](#).

In February 2017, Al Nadeem Center said in a [press release](#) that the Egyptian authorities closed the center due to unspecified license conditions. Many human right organizations, including [Alkarama](#) organization, condemned the closure.

Dalia Lotfy, an international attorney and a human rights advocate at the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, said in a telephone interview in February 2018, “Last month, four people died in prisons due to medical negligence.”

“Social media is not enough. People must take legal steps domestically and internationally as people did in Chile in 1973.”

Lotfy said Egyptian activists rely massively on social media to combat enforced disappearance, medical negligence, torture, arbitrary detention and executions under unfair trials.

“Social media is not enough. People must take legal steps domestically and internationally as people did in Chile in 1973,” Lotfy said.

The BBC said in a Jan. 10, 2001 [article](#), people in Chile submitted more than 1000 complaints and denunciations alleging violations of human rights.

Lotfy said, “If Egyptians submit a large number of complaints like Chileans, the international bodies will investigate the allegations of Egypt’s human rights violations and will sanction Egypt for not being legally bound to the international treats. However, many local human rights organizations unreasonably do not submit such complaints and suffice with press releases.”

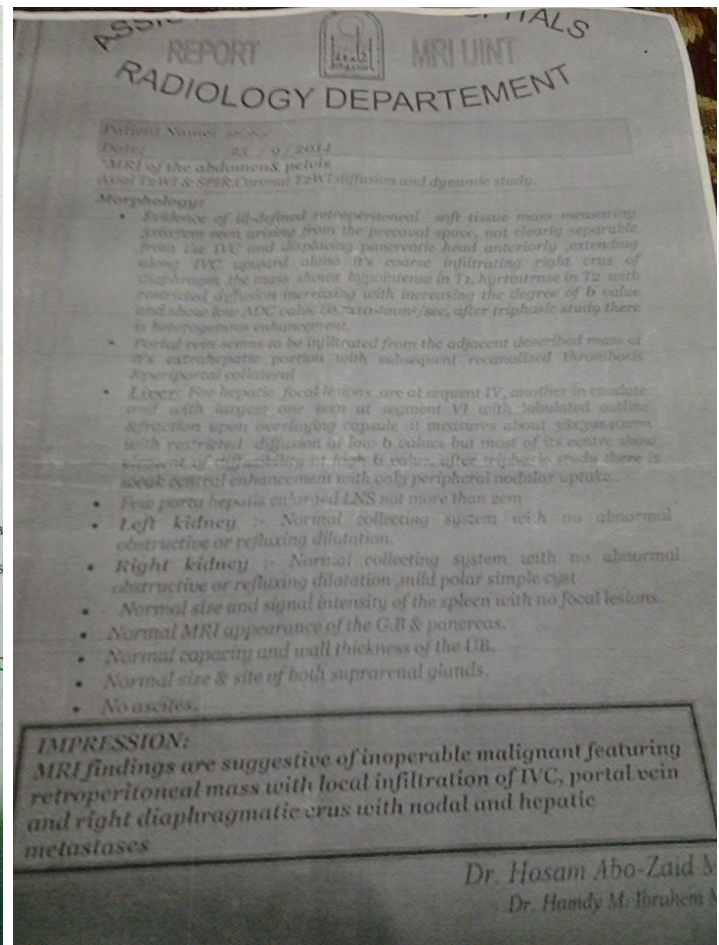
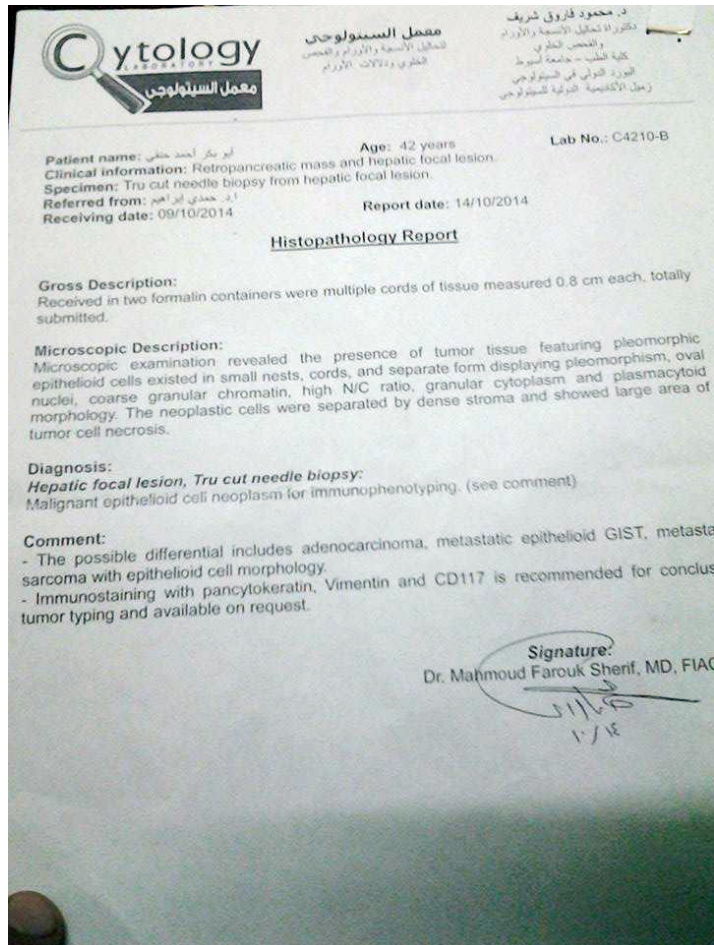
However, Ashraf Sayed said he submitted a complaint to the National Human Rights Council Ombudsman office, and nothing changed. “My disabled brother, Osama Sayed, is still in prison without a decree after three years,” Ashraf Sayed said.

Osama Sayed, who is diagnosed with paralysis in his four limbs and being tried

for more than 15 charges including rioting, resisting powers, and intimidation of citizens, was scheduled to appear in court on Feb. 22. The trial never happened and was postponed to March 19.

Some diseases are not pre-existing and start to show after detention. From the cases that died due to medical negligence in the detention facilities, Abu Bakr Hanafi, who died on Nov. 13, 2014, at the age of 42, did not suffer from any illnesses pre-arrest, said his wife, Asmaa Mansi in a telephone interview.

After six months of his detention, Hanafi was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and liver metastasis, which is stage four cancer, according to his medical reports.



Abu Bakr Hanafi's medical reports: A histopathology and MRI reports performed after the prison management approval detailing the cancer status and his poor health conditions.

Mansi said police arrested her husband him on Jan. 1, 2014, and he was charged in a case known as “Qenna Stations.” He was accused of involvement in clashes between pro and anti-Morsi supporters and riots

resulting in damage to Qenna Train Station, about 267.81 miles away from Cairo. His trial had been postponed over three times, and his detention had been renewed several times.



A Google [map](#) showing the location of Qena which is about 267.81 miles away from Cairo.

According to Human Rights Watch [report](#), the authorities deliberately denied him adequate treatment. “Returning a critically ill prisoner like Hanafi to prison despite doctors’ recommendations to send him to another hospital likely amounted to inhuman and degrading treatment under international law.”

Hanafi was arrested and kept without trial for 11 months. He developed cancer while being held. His widow said it took

approximately 40 days to get approval to transfer her late husband to a hospital when his illness became life-threatening. He died of advanced liver and pancreatic cancer on Nov. 13, 2014.

Mansi said it used to take 40 days to receive approvals to transfer her husband to the hospital. “At the time that my husband was unable to control his hand and do anything for himself, the warden allowed me a ten-minute visit only to help him with everything even feeding.”

Instead of releasing Hanafi for appropriate treatment of his chronic diseases, the warden denied Hanafi his basic human rights. He was not even allowed to listen to the Quran to help him to relieve his pain, Mansi said.

“I am still lamenting my husband. Even if I live for a thousand years, I shall never forget,” Mansi said in an anguished voice.

Hundreds of other prisoners have had similar medical treatment issues, according to Al Nadeem [report](#). A 23-year-old college student, Ahmed Elkhateeb, has been

languishing for four years and contracted [leishmaniasis](#) in prison because of the filthy prison cells and unhealthy food, according to the Egyptian Center for Economic Social Rights (ECESR) [report](#).

Elkhateeb’s family launched an online campaign on social media calling for his release due to his health conditions. The family said in their Facebook posts that Elkhateeb would die in prison soon due to the medical negligence if he were not released and received the appropriate medical care.

... تمت إضافة 2 صورتين جديدتين بواسطة **Fatma Elkhateeb** ٢ ساعتين • 

النهاره سابع يوم في إضراب الخطيب عن الاكل احمد تعبنا اصلا وصحته مش
مستحمله وبعد الإضراب بقت في النازل اكثر احمد عمل الإضراب بسبب الانتهاك والتعند
الأمني الي بيتعرضله احنا صوت الخطيب الي مش قادر يوصله اتكلموا عن الخطيب
واكتبو عنهمتوقفش البوست عنك وشيروا
عفو_صحي_للخطيب



مشاركة 

تعليق 

أعجبني 

Fatma Elkhateeb wrote in a Facebook post, “Today is the seventh day of Elkhateeb’s hunger strike. Ahmed is originally weary, and his health is deteriorating. After the strike, his health is waning more. Ahmed did the strike because of the violation and security invocation to which he suffers. We are his voice which he cannot deliver. Talk about Ahmed Elkhateeb. Write about him. Share the post and don’t stop it. #health_release_to_Elkhateeb.”

The ECESR report is entitled “Elkhateeb is in Danger.” The report states that Elkhateeb family submitted a complaint to the National Human Rights Council Ombudsman office, yet nothing happened.

“There is no objection in meeting Elkhateeb family’s pleas for his treatment at a private

hospital at their own expenses, or into taking the necessary legal procedures for his medical release,” Interior Minister Magdy Abdel Ghaffar said in a [statement](#) on March 29, 2017.

However, Elkhateeb was never released.

His sister, Fatma Elkhateeb, said in several Facebook posts that Ahmed Elkhateeb started a hunger strike as a protest for the maltreatment at the hospital and being handcuffed all the time except when going to the restroom.

“This disease causes damage to the internal viscera, liver, spleen and the whole blood content, which destroys the body immunity, leading to death at the end!” according to Elkhateeb’s online [petition](#).

“We are his voice which he cannot deliver.”

Fatma ElKhateeb was unreachable on telephone and Facebook. Then her Facebook profile was deactivated.

Before deactivating her Facebook account, Fatma Elkateeb said in a post that when people talked about her brother, he received better treatment and better medical care. However, now because people stopped talking about him, everything worsened again.

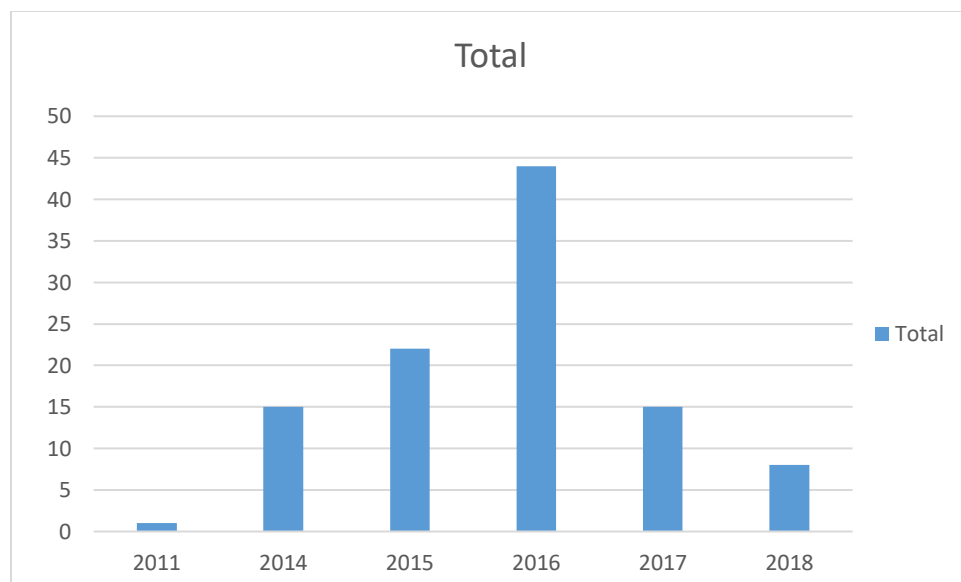
Fatma Elkhateeb wrote, “We are his voice which he cannot deliver. Talk about Ahmed Elkhateeb. Write about him.”

Executing political opponents

“Capital punishment must stop because trials in Egypt do not meet the standards of fairness and due process.”

NEW YORK – A record number of executions of at least 104 people for political and terrorism charges since al-Sisi held the office in 2014, compared to only one case within 2011-2013, according to

Cornell Center On the Death Penalty Worldwide [database](#). The European Parliament and international rights groups call for a halt to the death penalty in Egypt.



Number of the political executions in Egypt according to [Cornell Center On the Death Penalty Worldwide](#)

More than 1,700 people are under sentence of death, according to Cornell Center On the Death Penalty Worldwide [database](#).

The European Parliament has condemned Egypt for its use of the death penalty and

called on the Egyptian authorities to review all cases of pending death sentences to ensure that those convicted in flawed trials will have a fair retrial, according to the European Parliament [resolution](#).

An example of an unfair trial is Arab Sharkas' case which made headlines. The military court charged the defendants with killing soldiers during a military raid in the village of Arab Sharkas, Sinai in March

2014, according to the indictment [documents](#). The defendants, all civilians according to human rights groups, were tried and sentenced in a military court.

A copy of the indictment documents of Arab Sharkas case of the military court is at this [link](#).

An Egyptian court postponed the hearing of Arab Sharkas lawsuit calling to halt implementation of death sentences two days after the sentences were carried out. The lawsuit asserted that the death sentences were illegal and unconstitutional, according to an Anadolu Agency May 19, 2015 [article](#).

International April 10, 2015 [report](#). Three of the six defendants were already in enforced disappeared at the military prison, [Al Azouly](#), in Ismailia, 81 miles north-west of Cairo, at the same time of killing the soldiers in Sinai, according to the same Amnesty International [report](#).

The defendants were already in prison when their alleged crimes for which they were hung occurred, according to an Amnesty

Hence, they could not have committed the crime.



SOURCE: GUARDIAN RESEARCH IMAGE: GOOGLE MAPS

Al Azouli location in Ismailia, according to The Guardian [article](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/22/disappeared-egyptians-torture-secret-military-prison). Image Source:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/22/disappeared-egyptians-torture-secret-military-prison>

Asmaa Galal, a human rights activist, said she filled in a human rights complaint on behalf of one of the men executed, Hany Amer in December 2014.

Amer's name was not mentioned explicitly in the allegations [documents](#) that he had any role in the plot of killing the soldiers in Sinai.

However, he was hanged in May 2015.

Arab Sharkas case is not the only case where civilians are tried in a military court, and the

defendants were executed after an unfair trial. On Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2017, 15 men were convicted on terrorism charges were reportedly performed. They had been found guilty by a military court of killing several soldiers in Sinai in 2013, according to a New York Times Jan. 15, 2018 [article](#).

On the following Tuesday, on Jan. 2, 2018, five others were executed by hanging in the Kafr El-Sheikh Stadium case, according to the same New York Times [article](#).

“Despite the security challenges facing Egypt - in particular in Sinai - executions should not be used as a means to combat terrorism.”

In response to these multiple executions within two weeks, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights spokesperson Liz Throssell said on Jan. 5 in Geneva, “We are deeply shocked that 20 people are reported to have been executed in Egypt since last week,” according to the press briefing [notes](#).

Throssell said, “Despite the security challenges facing Egypt - in particular in Sinai - executions should not be used as a means to combat terrorism,” according to the press briefing [notes](#).

Throssell said in the press briefing [notes](#), “Civilians should only be tried in military or special courts in exceptional cases.”



United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights spokesperson, Liz Throssell, UN [photo](#).

“Reports also indicated that the prisoners who were executed may have been subjected to initial enforced disappearance and torture before being tried,” Throssell said.

Throssell said the capital punishment must stop because trials in Egypt do not meet the standards of fairness and due process.

These prosecutions and executions, which happened on Jan. 2, 2018, were carried out in response to an explosion occurred in front of Kafr El-Sheikh Stadium. It killed three students at the Military College and injured another two who were waiting for a bus to take them to the college on April 15,

2015, according to Justice for Human Rights (JHR) [report](#).

In the Kafr El-Sheikh Stadium case, the military court refused the demands of the defendants, who were accused of planting the device, as some of them were forcibly disappeared at the time of the explosion, according to JHR [report](#).

The demands were for a fair trial, considering the violations of illegal detention, enforced disappearance and torture, according to JHR [report](#).

Moreover, the demands included considering a technical report and the testimony of the director of explosive General Administration in Kafr El-Sheikh directorate who said that it was impossible to operate the explosive device with remote control, according to JHR [report](#).

Although the civilian defendants' demands were legal, the military court refused them, according to JHR [report](#).

The Human Right Watch said in its [report](#), “Uniformed judges subject to the orders of their military superiors.”

The reason for the increase in numbers of military trials of civilians with a drastic increase in the number of civilians sentenced to death in military courts is that al-Sisi decreed a new law on Oct. 27, 2014, in the absence of a parliament, according to the Human Right Watch [report](#).

Al-Sisi's new law placed all public and vital facilities under military jurisdiction and directs state prosecutors to refer any crimes at those places to their military counterparts, allowing military trials of civilians, according to the Human Right Watch [report](#).

However, the judges in civilian courts are unfair as in the military courts. For example, [Judge Mohammed Nagi Shehata](#) ordered capital punishment for 183 supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood in one trial, according to an LA Times Feb. 2, 2015 [article](#).

Forty-eight hours later, Judge Shehata sentenced 230 accused people to live in prison for allegations ranging from protesting, joining a sit-in, being members of Muslim Brotherhood to terrorism.

The Financial Times said in an April 24, 2015 [article](#), “Judge Shehata is Egypt's ‘hanging judge.’ Usually sporting dark sunglasses in court, he oversees trials for political crimes, including those charged with demonstrating illegally, and hands out harsh sentences.”

“Judge Shehata is Egypt's ‘hanging judge.’ Usually sporting dark sunglasses in court, he oversees trials for political crimes, including those charged with demonstrating illegally, and hands out harsh sentences.”



Judge Mohammed Nagi Shehata, Associated Press [photo](#).

Court of appeal canceled Judge Shehata's sentences in "Marriott Cell" case and "[Rabaa Operations Room](#)" case, according to his Dec. 12, 2015 [interview](#) with the al-Watan online media outlet.

In the Marriott Cell case, three Al Jazeera journalists were sentenced to between seven and ten years in prison. They were charged with promoting and giving material support to the Muslim Brotherhood group that they are members of; and that they produced false news for defaming Egypt and its national security, according to a New Yorker June 25, 2014 [article](#).

Amal Clooney was the lawyer for one of the defendants. She wrote an article to Huffington Post with title, "The anatomy of unfair trial."

Clooney said in this same Huffington Post Aug. 18, 2014 [article](#), "What logistics are involved in establishing a kangaroo court to silence critics? This trial provides a guide to how it's done."

"What logistics are involved in establishing a kangaroo court to silence critics? This trial provides a guide to how it's done."

Frame-up in Egypt

A system of false incriminations



Reem Qotb at Universal Studios before returning to Egypt. Photo via Free Reem Qotb Facebook [page](#).

NEW YORK -- The Egyptian State Security Prosecution detained photographer Reem Qotb Gobara (her nickname is Reem Qotb) upon her arrival at Cairo airport in December 2016 because she had a drone which the security forces in Egypt consider a spy plane, said her sister, Dalia Qotb. A drone is a common part of a photographer's equipment.

Dalia Qotb said, in a telephone interview on March 12, 2018, Reem Qotb was returning to Egypt from Hollywood after finishing some courses in filmmaking and video production. Before traveling to the United States, she took a class in Turkey about shooting documentary films.

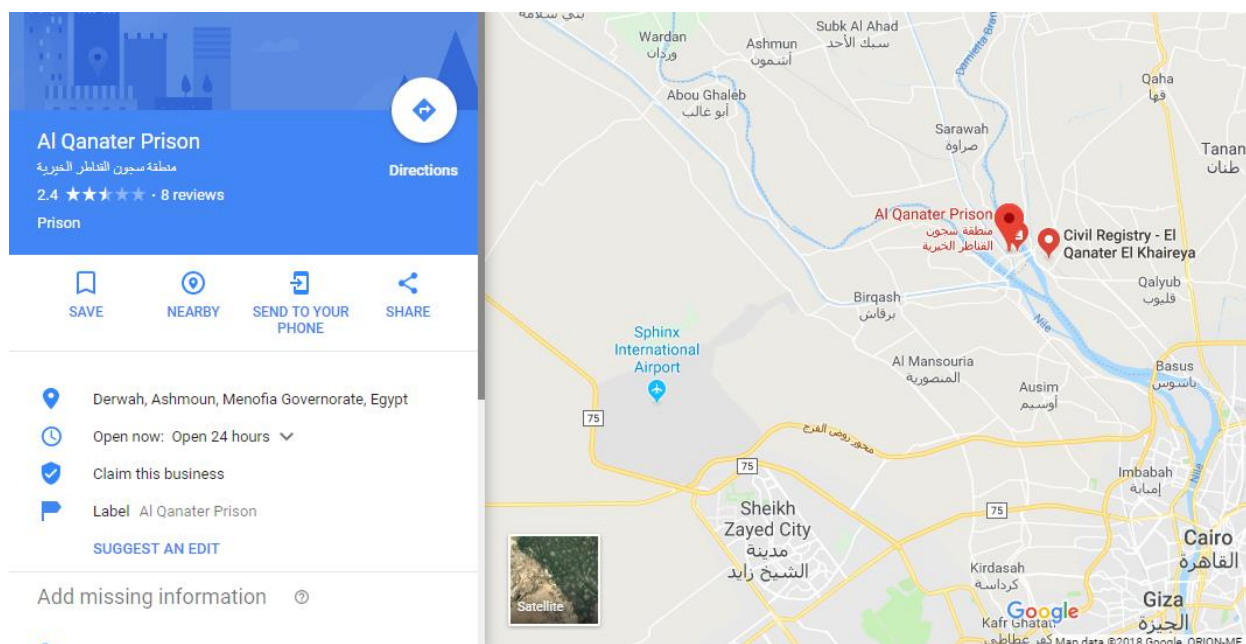
Dalia Qotb said, "All Reem's alleged crimes are in the future and about her intentions without any evidence."

Reem Kotb Bassuiony Kotb Gobara	40 years old	Filmmaker, director, educational technologist	Mrs Gobara was arrested at the Cairo airport. She was charged with “joining a banned group”, “conspiracy”, “spying” and “promoting a misleading image of Egypt” due to her filming activities. Her detention is renewed every 15 days pending trial. Her family is suffering from reprisals from the authorities due to her activities as a filmmaker.
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A screenshot shows allegations against Reem Qotb, according to Alkarama Foundation [report](#) to the United Nations Human Rights Council Working Group on Arbitrary Detention.

Dalia Qotb said Reem Qotb was found innocent in her last trial and should have been released under Egyptian law four months ago. However, the national security

refused to release her and kept her in the Qanater prison, about 12 miles away from Cairo, to confirm that she did not work for Al Jazeera.



A Google [map](#) showing the location of the Qanater Prison which is about 12 miles away from Cairo.

In connection with Qotb’s imprisonment, a United Nations Human Rights Council

Working Group on Arbitrary Detention determined an [opinion](#) at its 80th session in

November 2017 that Reem Qotb was deprived her liberty without any legal justification and requested from the Egyptian government to release her without any delay.

On March 29, 2018, Reem Qotb was released. She had been held in prison for 15 months after being cleared of all charges against her, according to Free Reem Qotb Facebook [page](#).

Reem Qotb illustrates a pattern of systematic suppression that starts with enforced disappearance without any judicial oversight and false incriminations.

The Human Rights Watch said in its Sep. 7, 2017 [report](#), “An assembly line of abuse aimed at preparing fabricated cases against suspected dissidents, beginning at the point

of arbitrary arrest, progressing to torture and interrogation during periods of enforced disappearance, and concluding with presentation before prosecutors, who often pressure detainees to confirm their confessions and take no measures to investigate the violations against them.”

Another story, which was from Egypt’s top trends, was the enforced disappearance of a 14-month-old girl, Alya Moder, with her family, according to Alkarama Foundation. The foundation submitted a [request](#) for urgent intervention to the United Nations to save the family.

The [Alkarama Foundation](#), a non-governmental human rights organization, established in 2004, has been actively assisting victims of human rights violations.

“An assembly line of abuse aimed at preparing fabricated cases against suspected dissidents.”



مريم مضر updated her profile picture.

25 March at 21:44 · 🌐

Yesterday Egyptian police riots arrested *abdallah moder * and his wife * fatema mousa * and their one year old daughter *alia * and his wife's brother *omar mousa* the last known connection and place is giza train station

Today one of the family went to their house and found it broken and the neighbors told him that security forces came at dawn and broke into it . This is how we know that they are being held by Egyptian police



Baby Alya's aunt, Mariam Moder, writes on [Facebook](#) that she and her family recognized Alya's detention along with her parents and her uncle after the police raided their home.

On March 24, baby Alya; her mother, Fatma Mohamed; her father, Abdullah Moder; and her uncle, Omar Mohamed, were detained by the national security agency from a train station in Giza, according to Abdullah's sister, Mariam Moder, Facebook [post](#).

On April 3, the Moder family said in a [statement](#), the Qanater prison administration handed over the child to them upon Fatma Mohamed's request because the baby had a fever due to sleeping on the cell ground.

The Mada Masr, an online media company, said in an April 2, 2018 [article](#), Fatima Mohamed was added to Case No. 441 of 2018 to confine the security of a higher state on charges of publishing false news and joining a group established contrary to the provisions of the law and the constitution.

The father and the uncle's locations are still unknown, according to the same Mada Masr [article](#).

Another 2015 case of the Egyptian government's falsely incriminating a 30-year-old man, Mohamed Abdlah, whom the Egyptian National Security Agency (NSA) officers go on to the plane and forcibly remove him after boarding, said his wife, Sara Mourad, in a telephone interview.

After concluding the marriage formalities in Egypt in December 2014, Mourad flew back to her family in Qatar to prepare for their wedding ceremony. Abdalah was traveling for their wedding, Mourad said.

However, the NSA enforced disappeared him and forced him to sign that he established a terroristic cell, Mourad said.

Then the officers photographed him with some weapons claiming that the officers found them with him on his detention. The airport video records invalidate these accusations, Mourad said.

However, he is still in jail since Jan. 1, 2015, according to a Dec. 26, 2017 New York Times [article](#) and [slideshow](#).

The New York Times said in a March 14, 2017 [article](#) that there are more than 60,000 political detainees in the Egyptian jails. Few people are released after the interference of other governments.

An extensive media coverage can save detainees' lives. "The international pressure decreases the detainees' torture and repression," Mourad, said.

Reem Qotb, baby Alya's family, Abdlah are three stories of thousands exposing a pattern of frame-ups used after enforced disappearance through the last years, according to Human Rights Watch [report](#).

Many stories about false incriminations without evidence made headlines and gained

international attention as [Mohamed Soltan](#), [Aya Hijazi](#), [Abdullah Elshamy](#), [Baher Mohammed](#), [Mohammed Fahmy](#) and [Peter Greste](#). They were all found innocent and were released after international pressure from other governments and human rights organizations.

“The international pressure decreases the detainees’ torture and repression.”

Journalists' repression in Egypt

Journalism is not a crime



Abdullah al-Fakharany, founder of Rassd News Network (RNN), at the Associated Press.
Asmaa Mahmoud, the manager of Free Fakharany pages on Facebook and Twitter, provided the photo.

NEW YORK -- On April 14, 2018, an Egyptian court rejected an appeal and upheld a sentence of five years against Abdullah al-Fakharany, a citizen journalist, medical doctor and founder of Rassd News Network (RNN) who has been imprisoned since Aug. 25, 2013.

Asmaa Mahmoud, the manager of Free Fakharany pages on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#),

said in an interview via WhatsApp, “Fakharany was imprisoned because of his journalistic work at Rassd. However, everybody expected his release. I am so depressed.”

Mahmoud said, al-Fakharany fiancée set up the Free Fakharany pages in January 2014, and Mahmoud was their friend who became a manager to the pages later in 2015.

Al-Fakharany was arrested in 2013 when he, with another two journalists, Samhy Mustafa and Mohammed al-Adly, went to visit his friend, Mohamed Soltan, at his house to check on Soltan's health, Mahmoud said.

On Aug. 14, 2013, Soltan was shot at Rabaa sit-in among hundreds who were killed and injured when the security forces quashed the sit-in, according to a New York Times Nov. 13, 2013 [article](#).

Security forces raided Soltan's home looking for Soltan's father, according to a New York Times May 30, 2015 [article](#).

Soltan's father was not home at that time. The forces arrested Soltan and the three journalists, according to a New York Times Aug. 29, 2015 [article](#).

Mahmoud said in the interview the four of them were charged with trumped-up politicized charges including spreading false information internationally to shake the grandeur of the state.

"They are subject to physical and psychological torture at the hands of security forces; beaten, stripped down to their undergarments, and their personal belongings burned in front of them," according to Avaaz petition [campaign](#).

"I was naïve - at least in the first days after I was arrested. I thought that the world would rise up to defend me, my colleagues and the freedom of the press, which was nurtured in Egypt after the 25 January Revolution in 2011."



Carlos Latuff's contribution to Free Fakharany and Samhy's campaigns in 2016. Image source: <https://twitter.com/FreeFakharany/status/768838253604704258>

According to a New York Times April 12, 2015 [article](#), a criminal court headed by Judge Mohammed Nagi Shehata tried the three journalists along with dozens of other defendants, including prominent leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in “Raba'a Operations Room” [case](#). Judge Shehata sentenced the three journalists to life in prison on April 11, 2015.

A Giza criminal court reduced the sentence to five years on May 8, 2017.

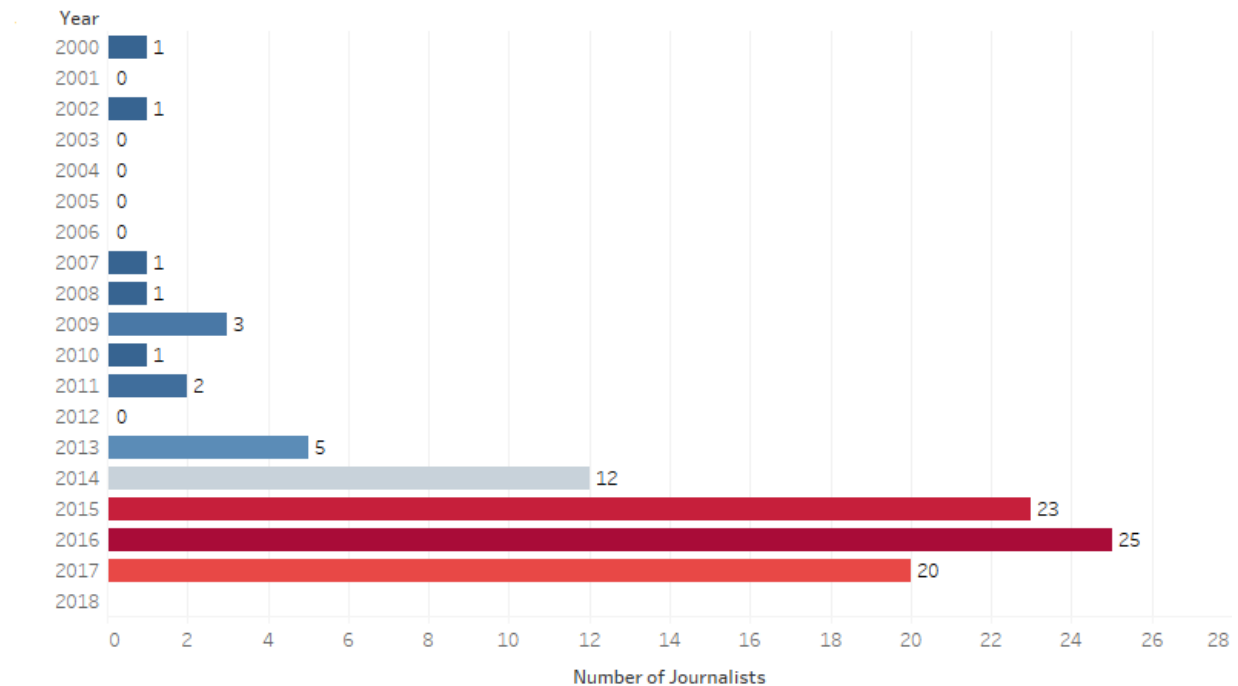
Al-Fakhrany wrote a [letter](#) from his prison in 2015 with a title, “My second World Press

Freedom Day in an Egyptian jail.” He said, “I was naïve - at least in the first days after I was arrested. I thought that the world would rise up to defend me, my colleagues and the freedom of the press, which was nurtured in Egypt after the 25 January Revolution in 2011. I thought all those press and human rights organisations, as well as opinion leaders who preach day and night about freedom of opinion and expression as essential values and principles, would do their best to stand in the face of flagrant violations against journalists in Egypt,” according to a Middle East Eye May 4, 2015 [article](#).

Fakharany is one of 20 journalists, who are currently detained in the Egyptian prisons, according to the 2017 Committee to Protect

Journalists (CPJ) [list](#). Arrests and imprisonment of journalists in Egypt are increasing.

Journalists jailed in Egypt since 2000



Journalists jailed in Egypt since 2000. Data collected from CPJ website. For the excel source file, click this [link](#).

The chart of the number of journalists, who are imprisoned in Egypt, shows a stark increase in the last three years since 2015. This graph is a visualization of the [statistics](#) provided on CPJ website.

CPJ said in its annual [report](#), “The number of journalists imprisoned worldwide hit

another new record in 2017, and for the second consecutive year more than half of those jailed for their work are behind bars in Turkey, China, and Egypt. The pattern reflects a dismal failure by the international community to address a global crisis in freedom of the press.”

“The pattern reflects a dismal failure by the international community to address a global crisis in freedom of the press.”

On April 12, 2018, the Front for the Defense of Journalists and Liberties (FDJL), a defending movement inside the [Syndicate of Journalists](#) in Egypt, said in a [statement](#) that it condemns the recent escalation to undermine the journalism profession and eliminate it.

According to the FDJL [statement](#), on April 1, the Supreme State Security Prosecution dismissed the editor-in-chief of the al-Masry al-Youm newspaper, investigated many of its reporters and imposed a penalty of 150,000EGP.

On April 3, 2018, the security forces raided another media outlet, Masr al-Arabia, Cairo office, shut it down and arrested its editor-in-chief, according to a Shorouk News April 5, 2018 [article](#).

On April 6, 2018, the security forces arrested a freelance photojournalist, a photographer with the pro-government newspaper, and a blogger for their coverage of the presidential elections, according to a CJP [alert](#).

On March 2, 2018, a reporter and cameraman were arrested for filming without a license, according to a CJP [alert](#).

On Feb. 16, 2018, a Huffington Post in Arabic journalist was arrested because of his interview with a senior member of the presidential campaign of Sami Anan, according to a CJP [alert](#).

Since May 24, 2017, the Egyptian government tightened censorship and blocked more than 465 websites which caused laying-off hundreds of journalists and workers, according to the U.S. based Open Observatory of Network Interference [report](#).

Arrests and detainment of journalists are not new to Egypt under the current government. This trend began with the election of al-Sisi in 2014.

Journalists being detained include photojournalists, print reporters, camera operators, internet reporters, editors, broadcast reporters, producers, and photographers, according to the 2017 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) [list](#).

One of the detained journalists is a photojournalist called Mahmoud Abou Zeid, known as Shawkan who was arrested in 2013.



The most recent international campaign calling for Shawkan's release is with hashtag #MyPicForShawkan. This solidarity campaign is launched by Reporters without Borders. When he said that he misses the sky, people photographed the sky and posted it on a #SkyForShawkan hashtag.

Shawkan was arrested while covering clashes between the Egyptian security forces and supporters of ousted President Mohamed Morsi during the dispersal of the pro-Morsi sit-in at Raba'a Al-Adawiya in

Cairo, according to a Jan. 28, 2016 Huffington Post [article](#).

Shawkan was held with other foreign correspondents who were released the same day while Shawkan is imprisoned since that day, Aug. 14, 2013, according to the CPJ [report](#).

Shawkan received broad press attention, and international [campaigns](#) called for his release began shortly after his arrest. On April 23, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) awarded him its 2018 press freedom prize, according to a UNESCO [statement](#).

In reply to the UNESCO, Egypt's Foreign Ministry said, in a [statement](#) on its Facebook page, that it condemned Shawkan's nomination.

Shawkan was sentenced to death after being charged with weapons possession, illegal assembly, and attempted murder, according to court [documents](#).

Shawkan stayed in pre-trial detention for more than two years.

The trials were regularly adjourned until late 2017 which included more than 700 defendants, according to the Egyptian Observatory for Journalism and Media [press release](#).

According to CPJ [report](#), Shawkan was diagnosed with Hepatitis C, suffered from blurry vision, shivers, insomnia and loss of appetite. The prison doctor recommended to be given a blood transfusion, but his request to be transferred to a hospital was denied.

Due to the Egyptian government cracking down on journalists, the Front for the Defense of Journalists and Liberties (FDJL) said in its [statement](#), “The FDJL calls on all journalists to address the attack on the press and its future. Return to the syndicate to discuss the conditions of the profession. Resist the press quashing before a day when journalism would die, and journalists would be whether suspended, stalked, or imprisoned.”

Press Behind Bars (@FreeEgyptPress) said that they do not do interviews and referred Khadidja Nemar, a human Right lawyer at Alkarama Foundation and the United Nations. However, Nemar did not reply the messages and the emails. Similarly,

Mohamed Soltan did not answer the calls and messages.