

URGENT ACTION

POLITICIAN DETAINED OVER SOCIAL MEDIA POST

On July 31, policemen in plain clothes arbitrarily arrested prominent Egyptian opposition politician, Yehia Hussein Abdelhady, aged 71, from a street in Cairo. His arrest came a few days after he published a post on Facebook criticizing President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and the army and calling for regime change. On the same day of his arrest, a Supreme State Security Prosecution prosecutor interrogated him over the post and ordered his pretrial detention for 15 days pending investigations into bogus terrorism-related charges and for publishing “false news”. He must be immediately and unconditionally released as he is detained solely for his peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 74.24**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

Public Prosecutor Mohamed Shawky Ayyad
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab, Cairo, Arab
Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2577 4716
X: [@EgyptianPPO](#)

Egyptian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Motaz Mounir Zahran
3521 International Court, NW,
Washington DC 20008
Email: Embassy@egyptembassy.net
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Dear Counselor, or Dear Ambassador,

I am writing to express my concern over the arbitrary detention of 71-year-old **Yehia Hussein Abdelhady**, a prominent opposition politician and former spokesperson of the Civil Democratic Movement. Authorities are targeting him in relation to his Facebook post published on July 22 in which he questioned how long the military intends to remain silent while Egyptian people live in acute poverty amid the government's failure and corruption, calling for regime change in the country.

On July 31, policemen in plain clothes arrested Yehia Hussein Abdelhady. Policemen neither showed an arrest warrant nor informed Yehia Hussein Abdelhady of the reasons for his arrest. They also refused to identify themselves. On the same day, a Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) prosecutor interrogated him in relation to charges of “joining a terrorist group”, publishing “false news”, “inciting the commission of a terrorist crime”, “misuse of social media”, and “funding terrorism”. After interrogations, the prosecutor ordered his pretrial detention for 15 days pending investigations. Yehia Hussein Abdelhady is held in 10th of Ramadan prison and has yet to be permitted visits by his family, amid concerns over his age-related health conditions.

I urge you to ensure that Yehia Hussein Abdelhady is immediately and unconditionally released and all charges against him dropped as he is being detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression. The Egyptian authorities must refrain from using counterterrorism legislation to target peaceful critics and keeping them in pretrial detention indefinitely.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Yehia Hussein Abdelhady is a vocal opponent of the government of Egypt. He is a co-founder and former spokesperson of the Civil Democratic Movement, a political opposition alliance. Over the past few years, he has been regularly publishing articles and social media content critical of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's government.

Egyptian authorities have been consistently targeting Yehia Hussein Abdelhady for his political opposition. On November 11, 2018, prosecutors investigated him over charges of insulting the president, disturbing public order, and publishing "false news" after he published a Facebook post criticizing President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's statement on the 25 January Revolution of 2011. Prosecutors ordered his release on bail, [according to local rights groups](#).

On January 29, 2019, authorities arrested Yehia Hussein Abdelhady a few hours after the Civil Democratic Movement called for the release of its members who were arrested after commemorating the anniversary of the 25 January Revolution. Prosecutors at the SSSP opened criminal investigations against him in Case No. 277 of 2019 into charges of joining a group established in violation of law, planning and preparing to commit violence, and using the 25 January Revolution anniversary to cause chaos in the country, and publishing "false news", according to [local rights groups](#). Prosecutors ordered his pretrial detention for 15 days pending investigations.

In June 2021, while still in pretrial detention in connection to Case No. 277 of 2019, he was referred to trial in connection to the 2018 case. An emergency court sentenced him to four years in prison in May 2022. Proceedings in front of the emergency courts in Egypt are inherently unfair. Defendants are denied the right to appeal their convictions and sentences in front of a higher tribunal. During the same month, President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi pardoned him. He was released on June 1, 2022, after three and half years in prison.

On January 18, 2024, in a separate case, a court sentenced Yehia Hussein Abdelhady to a suspended one year in prison over charges of publishing "false news" that stemmed from his social media content that was critical of the government. He was referred to trial without being questioned, according to the [Egyptian Front for Human Rights, a local human rights group](#).

Under international law and standards, the right to freedom of expression applies to information and ideas of all kinds, including those that may be regarded as deeply offensive, disturbing, or shocking.

Since 2013, the Egyptian authorities have consolidated their grip on social media and intensified their crackdown on people posting content critical of the government. Since then, the authorities have subjected thousands of critics to arbitrary arrest and prolonged pretrial detention on trumped-up terrorism-related charges or for publishing "false news" in contravention of the right to freedom of expression, association, or peaceful assembly.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: November 9, 2024

NAME AND PRONOUN: Yehia Hussein Abdelhad (he/him)