

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER DETAINED IN DIRE CONDITIONS

Detained human rights lawyer Ibrahim Metwaly is being held in solitary confinement and has raised allegations of torture and ill-treatment. The co-founder of the Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group has been detained since 10 September and has had no access to his family since then.

Ibrahim Metwaly told his lawyers on 20 September that, after his arrest at the airport on 10 September, security forces detained him there overnight before transferring him to the National Security building in Abasseya district in Cairo. He further recounts that national security officers stripped him naked, electrocuted him in various parts of his body, threw water on him, and beat him. The officers went on to ask him, without the presence of a lawyer, details about his activism regarding enforced disappearance in Egypt. Two days after his detention, the Supreme National Security Prosecution interrogated him and Ibrahim Metwaly told the prosecutor that he was tortured. So far, there is no information that Egyptian authorities have investigated Ibrahim's torture.

Following the interrogation by the Prosecution, Egyptian authorities moved Ibrahim Metwaly to Tora maximum security prison in the Southern suburbs of Cairo where he is being held in solitary confinement. The floor of his cell is submerged in water, there is no electricity, and no bedding. Despite his lawyer having reported these conditions, there has been no response by the prison authorities.

Ibrahim Metwaly is being investigated on charges including "founding and leading an illegal group", Families of the Disappeared in Egypt, "conspiring with foreign parties to harm Egyptian national security," and "publishing false news". Amnesty International believes that the charges against him represent a reprisal against him for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association. Ibrahim Metwaly's family attempted to visit him on 25 September, however prison authority rejected their request to see him, claiming that he is banned from receiving visitors.

1) TAKE ACTION

Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Ibrahim Metwaly as he is detained solely for peacefully exercising his rights to freedom of expression and association;
- Ensure that, pending his release, he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and held in humane conditions of detention, including by ending his solitary confinement and allowing him access to his family;
- Order an investigation into his allegations of torture;
- Establish an independent and impartial investigation into allegations of enforced disappearances, including the case of Ibrahim Metwaly's son, and sign the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

Contact these two officials by 9 November 2017:

Minister of Interior
Magdy Abdel Ghaffar
Ministry of Interior
Fifth Settlement, New Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 2794 5529 +2027927189
Email: center@iscmi.gov.eg -OR- E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg
Twitter: @moiegy
Salutation: Dear Minister

Ambassador Yasser Reda, Embassy of Egypt
3521 International Ct NW, Washington DC 20008
Fax: 202 244 4319 -OR- 202 244 5131
Phone: 202 895 5400
Email: embassy@egyptembassy.net
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 210.17*

Here's why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ibrahim Metwaly is a lawyer and co-founder of the Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group. He co-founded the group along with Hanan Badr el-Din, after his son Amr was forcibly disappeared on 8 July 2013. He began to search for his son in police stations, prisons, hospitals, and morgues with no success. Egyptian security forces denied knowledge of his whereabouts.

On 12 September, the Supreme State Security Prosecution ordered the detention of human rights lawyer Ibrahim Metwaly for 15 days pending investigations into charges of founding and leading an illegal group, the “Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group,” “conspiring with foreign parties to harm Egyptian national security,” and “publishing false news.” Ibrahim Metwaly is 52 years old and suffers from chronic back pain. This is the second time authorities have targeted a member of the Families of the Disappeared in Egypt group, following the arrest of Hanan Badr el-Din, the group’s other co-founder, on 20 May.

Amnesty International has extensively documented enforced disappearances in Egypt as a tool commonly used by security forces against political activists and protesters, including students and children. Hundreds of people have been arbitrarily arrested and detained and subjected to enforced disappearance by state agents, with the authorities refusing to acknowledge their detention or refusing to give information about their fate or whereabouts. Those detained in this way do not have access to their lawyers or families and are held incommunicado without judicial oversight. Egyptian NGOs allege that an average of three to four people are subjected to enforced disappearance each day. This pattern of violations has become particularly evident since March 2015 when President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi appointed Major-General Magdy Abd el-Ghaffar as Minister of Interior. See Amnesty international's report: ‘Officially, you do not exist’: Disappeared and tortured in the name of counter-terrorism (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/4368/2016/en/>).

Torture and other ill-treatment are often associated with enforced disappearance. Victims, including children, and their families told Amnesty International that NSA officers tortured and subjected them to other ill-treatment to force them to “confess” to crimes or implicate others. Such “confessions” were then used to justify their continued pre-trial detention and as evidence to obtain convictions at trial. In some cases, the NSA videotaped detainees’ “confessions” and released them to local media.

Egyptian authorities regularly deny the practice of enforced disappearances. Most recently, on 4 June, Alaa Abed, head of the Human Rights Committee in the Egyptian parliament stated in *Parlmany* newspaper that “enforced disappearances do not exist, and is instead a term coined by the Muslim Brotherhood and the fifth column”. In March 2016, the Egyptian Minister of Interior also said: “There is no enforced disappearance in Egypt, and the security forces operate within the legal framework”. Egyptian human rights groups have challenged the Ministry of Interior’s denials with hundreds of documented cases of enforced disappearance.

Egypt is not a signatory to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and, according to local human rights group the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms, security forces forcibly disappeared at least 165 people between January and August 2017.

Name: Ibrahim Metwaly

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 210/17 Index: MDE 12/7179/2017 Issue Date: 28 September 2017