

URGENT ACTION

UNJUSTLY JAILED COUPLE HELD INCOMMUNICADO

Aisha el-Shater, daughter of a Muslim Brotherhood senior figure, and her husband lawyer Mohamed Abo Horeira, who were transferred to the 10th of Ramadan prison on June 1 and May 23, respectively, continue to be denied contact with their families and lawyers. They are serving unjust prison terms following their conviction on bogus charges stemming from their family links and peaceful exercise of their human rights. They must be immediately and unconditionally released.

TAKE ACTION:

1. 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 55.22**. 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.

President Abdelfattah al-Sisi

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Ambassador Motaz Zahran

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Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Your Excellency,

I am concerned about the arbitrary detention of Aisha el-Shater, the 42-year-old daughter of Muslim Brotherhood leader Khairat el-Shater, and her husband lawyer Mohamed Abo Horeira, solely in relation to their human rights work and peaceful dissent. On 5 March, an Emergency State Security Court (ESSC) sentenced Aisha el-Shater and Mohamed Abo Horeira to ten and 15 years in prison, respectively, following a grossly unfair trial referred to as the "Coordination for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF) case" by Egyptian media. They were convicted of multiple charges, including supporting a terrorist group (the Muslim Brotherhood) and spreading "false news" about human rights abuses by security forces through the ECRF's Facebook page. The court also convicted Ezzat Ghoniem, founder of the ECRF, human rights lawyer [Hoda Abdelmoneim](#) and 26 others and sentenced them to prison terms ranging from five years to life. The court also ruled to add the 30 convicted defendants to the "list of terrorists" which leads to asset freezes and travel bans and place them on police probation for five years after prison. Defendants were denied their right to defence, not to self-incriminate and to genuine review by a higher tribunal. Verdicts by ESSCs are final and cannot be appealed. Only Your Excellency retains the power to authorize, quash or commute sentences or to order a retrial; the decision is pending.

On June 1, authorities transferred Aisha el-Shater from al-Qanater prison to the 10th of Ramadan prison in Sharqia governorate. Her family learned that hygiene conditions in her new cell, which she shares with two other prisoners, are better than her previous conditions in al-Qanater prison. However, she has no access to sunlight and for her exercise outside her cell, she is only allowed to walk in a corridor. She is also banned from having any personal belongings and a refrigerator, which means she cannot receive any perishable food items from her family and must rely on prison food. Aisha el-Shater suffers from aplastic anaemia, a rare and serious condition affecting the blood. Despite this, prison authorities continue to refuse her adequate healthcare, including transfer to an outside hospital if necessary for diagnosis and treatment. On May 16, Mohamed Abo Horeira was transferred from Badr 3 prison to the 10th of Ramadan prison. His family members are banned from visiting him and have no information about his prison conditions and health. Both Aisha el-Shater and Mohamed Abo Horeira are banned from corresponding with their relatives and lawyers through letters or phone calls.

I urge you to ensure that Aisha el-Shater, Mohamed Abo Horeira and others convicted in connection with the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms case are immediately and unconditionally released and that their convictions and sentences are quashed as they stem solely from the exercise of their human rights or peaceful dissent. Pending their release, they must be provided with the means to regularly communicate with their family and lawyers and with access to adequate healthcare including outside prison, if necessary.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On November 1, 2018, National Security Agency forces (NSA) broke into the house of Hoda Abdelmoniem in Cairo at 1:30 am, ransacked it, and took her away blindfolded. She was subjected to enforced disappearance for three weeks after her arrest until she was brought to the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) for investigation. She was then taken back to an undisclosed location. Her family briefly saw her again on 24 and 28 November 2018 at the SSSP office. She was subjected to enforced disappearance again between December 2, 2018 and January 14, 2019, as authorities refused to disclose her whereabouts to relatives and lawyers.

On the day of Hoda Abdelmoniem's arrest, on November 1, 2018, the Egyptian authorities launched a series of raids, arresting at least 31 human rights defenders and lawyers; 10 women and 21 men. The Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), which documents enforced disappearances and the use of the death penalty, and provides legal aid to victims of human rights violations, was particularly targeted by the crackdown. In a statement published on 1 November 2018 announcing the suspension of its human rights work, ECRF cited the situation in Egypt as incompatible with human rights work and demanded the UN Human Rights Council to intervene.

On November 30 2020, Hoda Abdelmoniem's family learned from other prisoners' relatives that she was taken to the prison hospital before being transferred to an external hospital after suffering from severe pain. While her loved ones have been denied access to her medical records by prison authorities and therefore don't have detailed information about her condition, they were informed by other prisoners' families that one of her kidneys had failed, while the other was functioning poorly. On December 1 2020, the interior ministry publicly claimed that she has been provided with healthcare and does not suffer from serious medical conditions. During a court hearing held on October 11, 2021, Hoda Abdelmoniem told the judges that the prison doctor said she required a cardiac catheterization and requested her release on medical grounds.

On August 23, 2021, the SSSP referred Hoda Abdelmoniem as well as human rights defender and founder of the ECRF, Ezzat Ghoniem, Aisha al-Shater, daughter of Muslim Brotherhood leader Shairat al-Shater, and lawyer Mohamed Abu Horira, as well as 27 other defendants to trial in front of an Emergency State Security Court (ESSC). The SSSP indicted them on various charges, including membership in a terrorist group (the Muslim Brotherhood), disseminating false news about human rights abuses by security forces through a Facebook page titled "the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms", funding a terrorist group and possession of pamphlets to promote the terrorist group's objectives. On 5 March 2023, an ESSC convicted 30 defendants and sentenced them to prison terms ranging from five years to life; one defendant was acquitted. The court also ruled to add the 30 convicted defendants to the "list of terrorists" which leads to asset freezes and travel bans and place them on police probation for five years after prison. On June 8, Hoda Abdelmoniem's family learned that she was transferred to 10th of Ramadan prison from al-Qanater women's prison; and were able to visit her for the first time since August 2022. She told them during the visit that prison authorities in al-Qanater women's prison confiscated all her belongings including medicine and a radio before the transfer. The confiscation of the radio means that she no longer has access to news in 10th of Ramadan prison. She added that she was feeling more isolated in the 10th of Ramadan prison as a result of no longer being abreast of news, sharing the cell with prisoners not held for political reasons and the prison authorities' banning her from exercising in the yard with other prisoners.

On October 25, 2021, President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi announced that he would not extend the state of emergency, in force since 2017, which allowed for the creation of ESSCs. Article 19 of the law governing the state of emergency stipulates that ongoing trials are to continue even after the state of emergency is no longer in force. Proceedings in front of ESSCs are inherently unfair. Defendants are denied the right to appeal their convictions and sentences to a higher tribunal. Other documented fair trial violations include the right to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of their defence, right to communicate with counsel of their own choosing and right to a public hearing. In addition, judges at the ESSC routinely deny requests by lawyers to photocopy casefiles, which in some cases exceed 2,000 pages, instead instructing them to review them in court. Prosecutors and judges have also failed to provide copies of indictment orders to defendants and their lawyers, undermining their right to be informed of the exact nature and cause of charges against them. Hoda Abdelmoniem volunteered as a consultant for the ECRF and had been active in documenting human rights violations including cases of enforced disappearances. She is a former member of the National Council for Human Rights and of the Egyptian Bar Association. On November 27, 2020, the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe granted its 2020 Human Rights Award to Hoda Abdelmoniem and six other detained lawyers in Egypt.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: September 15, 2023

NAME AND PRONOUN: Hoda Abdelmoniem (she/her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/6173/2022/en/