

Escalating Repression Against Lawyer and Human Rights Defender Hoda Abdelmonem

The undersigned human rights organizations strongly condemn the continued repression by Egyptian authorities against human rights defenders and lawyers, who are frequently targeted with frivolous charges to justify their prolonged arbitrary pretrial detention, in flagrant disregard for judicial rulings and the rule of law.

On November 18, 2024, the family of lawyer and human rights defender Hoda Abdelmonem was startled by her referral to the State Security Prosecution on a new case with the same charges as her previous case, No. 800 of 2019. This is the third case filed against her following the expiration of her sentence in the first case, No. 1552 of 2018, and her subsequent rotation in a second case, No. 730 of 2020, on the same day her five-year sentence concluded. These practices underscore the Egyptian authorities' blatant disregard for judicial decisions and their violation of the legal principle prohibiting double jeopardy.

This comes as the Egyptian government continues to promote its purported efforts to improve human rights conditions ahead of Egypt's upcoming Universal Periodic Review at the United Nations Human Rights Council. However, the authorities persist in their systematic targeting of dissidents, lawyers and human rights defenders through practices such as visitation bans, solitary confinement, rotating detainees into new cases, denying medical care, undermining fair trial guarantees, and even introducing new

legislative proposals, such as the draft Criminal Procedures Law, which erodes the foundations of justice and codifies existing legal violations.

Hoda Abdelmonem was arrested on November 1, 2018, and subjected to enforced disappearance for 21 days before her family located her in a security facility in Abbasiya. She remained in arbitrary pretrial detention for over four years until March 5, 2023, when the Emergency State Security Court sentenced her to five years in prison on fabricated charges. Although her sentence ended on October 31, 2023, she was shockingly charged again in a new case (No. 730 of 2020) with the same accusations, violating the legal principle of double jeopardy.

Hoda Abdelmonem's health has deteriorated significantly during her detention and imprisonment. She has had a heart attack and suffers from a blood clot in her left leg, loss of function in her left kidney, kidney reflux in her right kidney, and severe imbalance due to middle ear inflammation. In August 2023, her family learned that she had recently been diagnosed with diabetes while in the prison hospital.

The campaign emphasizes that Hoda Abdelmonem's case is not isolated, but part of a systematic pattern of violations targeting dissidents, lawyers and human rights defenders. The rotating of charges after the completion of her sentence reflects a blatant disregard for judicial rulings and highlights the undue control of Egypt's security apparatus over the fate of political and rights-based detainees. This pattern is mirrored in other cases, such as that of Alaa Abdel Fattah, who is unjustifiably kept behind bars despite the completion of his sentence, and Ibrahim

Metwally, who has been in continuous detention since 2017 through successive case recycling.

Accordingly, the Free Hoda Campaign calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Hoda Abdelmonem, the dismissal of the baseless charges against her, and an end to the practice of “case rotation” which serves as a tool for undermining the rule of law and repressing human rights defenders.

The campaign emphasizes the urgent need to rectify Egypt's systemic issue of arbitrary pretrial detention. This requires a genuine commitment to upholding the rule of law, rather than superficial repressive legal reforms. We urge the international community to pressure the Egyptian government to fulfill its international human rights obligations and ensure the safety and freedom of all human rights defenders and lawyers.

Signatures:

- International Federation for Human Rights
- Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
- Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
- Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms
- El Nadeem Center against Violence and Torture
- Access Now
- International Service for Human Rights
- Digital Democracy Now
- Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR)
- Lawyers for Lawyers

- Musawa-The Palestinian Centre for the independence of judiciary and legal profession
- Refugees Platform In Egypt (RPE)
- EuroMed Rights
- The Regional Coalition for Women Human Rights Defenders in South West Asia and North Africa (WHRDMENA)
- Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)
- Alliance for Lawyers at Risk's
- EgyptWide for Human Rights
- ACIJLP
- CAGE International
- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
- Sinai Foundation for Human Rights
-
-
-
-