

# Stand with jailed activists who fought for Egyptian workers' rights

Ten years after revolution in Egypt shook the world, a vicious military regime has detained tens of thousands without trial in dire conditions. This briefing for trade union activists highlights the cases of six socialist activists who are currently detained on spurious charges. They include journalists, a public transport worker, lawyers and a human rights researcher.

## Medical neglect

Family members and lawyers are growing increasingly concerned for the health of detained journalist Hisham Fouad who has been denied medical examinations and treatment for both a pre-existing pathology in his back vertebrae and new health conditions, including digestive and dental problems, for more than month.

Deliberate medical neglect is shockingly common in Egyptian prisoners, and those in "pre-trial" detention like Hisham are even more vulnerable than those who have been convicted. Nearly 70 detainees died between January and November 2020 from medical neglect, and there were dozens of appeals and complaints from prisoners and their families during the same period.

Amnesty International's report on Egypt for 2019 noted that political prisoners were routinely subjected to "denial of adequate medical care that amounted to torture."

## Emergency action

- **Write a letter of protest at the denial of medical care and treatment to Hisham Fouad Abdel Alim, detained in State Security case 930 and post it to Ambassador Nasser Kamel, Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 26 South Street, London, W1K 1DW**
- **Email the same text to: [eg.emb\\_london@mfa.gov.eg](mailto:eg.emb_london@mfa.gov.eg). You can also try phoning 020 7499 3304 or 020 7499 2401.**
- **Send a copy of the letter to your local MP and Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab: [fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk)**



Hisham Fouad

A veteran socialist activist and labour journalist. Hisham was a key figure in organizing against the war on Iraq, and in solidarity with striking workers and independent trade unions.

He was arrested on 25 June 2019 and accused of "economic conspiracy to fund a terror organization."



Mahienour El-Massry

A socialist activist and human rights lawyer from Alexandria. She was subject to arrest and detention several times, on fabricated charges: "spreading fake news" and "membership in illegal terror organization." Mahienour has represented worker and political activists as well organising solidarity for refugees.



Haitham Mohamadein

A long time socialist activist and labour lawyer who has defended workers both in employment courts and in political trials. He has been pre-trial detention since 12 May 2019 on fabricated charges of "spreading fake news" and "membership of an illegal organization."



Khalil Rizk

A socialist activist, and a public transport worker, who has been involved in trade union organizing. He was arrested on 17 November 2019 from his neighbourhood in Cairo, and was accused of "participation in a terror group, spreading fake news, and misusing social media."

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## Democracy denied

The revolution of 2011 shook the authoritarian Egyptian regime to its core. Huge protests and strikes disrupted the security forces' interference in political life. There was greater space for Egyptians to exercise their democratic rights, campaign and vote for parties and candidates according to their political beliefs, and organise themselves to defend their social rights.

Two years later, the military overthrew elected president Mohamed Morsi and massacred his supporters in the worst acts of peacetime violence in the modern history of the country. This paved the way for a systematic assault on political freedoms and social rights: tens of thousands were jailed, not just from the Islamist movement which had backed Morsi, but also liberals, socialists, Nasserists as well as human rights activists, civil society organisers, trade unionists and journalists.

Hundreds have been murdered and tortured by the security forces, including researcher Giulio Regeni, a PhD student at the University of Cambridge who disappeared in 2016.

## Workers' rights smashed

Mass strikes during the five years before the 2011 revolution led to the emergence of independent trade unions, challenging the state's control of the workplaces. Under the military regime since 2013, these organisational gains have been rolled back, strikes and protests effectively outlawed, trade unionists arrested and in some cases sentenced to long jail terms by military courts.

## British backing

Egypt's military rulers enjoy the support of the British government. Boris Johnson has regularly assured Egyptian president Abdelfattah al-Sisi, of his country's importance to Britain as a trading partner. David Cameron welcomed Sisi to Downing Street in 2015 and signed agreements promoting active collaboration in areas as varied as security and "counter-terrorism" to higher education. British arms worth £24 million were exported to Sisi's regime in the last 3 years alone.



Ayman Abdel-Moati

A veteran socialist activist, writer, poet, publisher, blogger and labour researcher. He was arrested from his workplace on 18 October 2018, and accused of "colluding with a terrorist group to achieve its goals and disseminating false news." While in detention, prosecutors have continued to accuse him of new "crimes", including agitating on social media from jail.



Patrick George Zaki

A young socialist activist, and gender researcher with the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, one of Egypt's leading rights watchdogs. He was detained at the Cairo Airport, on 7 February 2020, on his way back from Italy, where he was studying. He was subject to torture by electric shocks, and remains in pre-trial detention on fabricated charges including "misusing social media" and "spread of fake news."

## Model trade union resolution

- This union notes that Egyptian citizens are routinely denied their democratic and social rights by the current military regime, which is responsible for the arbitrary detention of tens of thousands of political prisoners, torture and extrajudicial executions.
- This union further notes that the British government continues to export millions of pounds' worth of arms and military equipment every year.
- This union believes that solidarity with detained Egyptian activists is vital given the British government's role in bolstering the regime's repressive capacity and rewarding it for systematic human rights violations with trade deals and cooperation in areas such as higher education.
- This union resolves to:
  - Write to the Egyptian Ambassador calling for the release of Hisham Fouad, Haitham Mohamedain, Mahienour el-Massry, Khalil Rizk, Ayman Abdelmoati and Patrick Zaki and other political prisoners.
  - Disseminate information about Egypt Solidarity Initiative's campaigns to our members encouraging them to take part.

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