

24 August 2016

Egypt: Ongoing harassment of the Foundation of the Victims of Abduction and Forced Disappearance and its founder

On 6 September 2016, the Court of Administrative Justice will decide if the **Foundation of the Victims of Abduction and Forced Disappearance (FVAFD)** can register under Egypt's Association Law, amid ongoing intimidation of its founder.

[FVAFD](#) is a non-profit foundation that provides legal aid, material support and other assistance to victims of violence, assault, abduction and enforced disappearance. The organisation monitors human rights violations committed against religious and ethnic minorities. Mr **Ebram Louis** is the Founder and Chairman of the FVAFD Board of Trustees, he advocates for minority and women's rights in Egypt.

In December 2014, the Ministry of Social Solidarity [denied](#) registration of FVAFD under the Egyptian Associations Law (Law 84 of 2002). Although the Ministry failed to provide official reasons for denying the registration, it has verbally stated that the reasons were related to "security concerns". In February 2015, FVAFD filed a lawsuit before the Court of Administrative Justice to challenge this decision and in September 2015, the Court denied an [urgent hearing](#) of this lawsuit. Since June 2016, the judgement has been postponed three times.

The delay of the settlement of the lawsuit coincides with the ongoing intimidation of [Ebram Louis](#), who was summoned for questioning by the National Security Agency in June 2016. He was questioned about his human rights activities, his sources of funding and income and his ties with international human rights groups. He was also warned that he may face serious charges if he does not stop his work on the rights of religious minorities and forced disappearance in Egypt.

On 13 August 2016, following his participation in a protest in central Cairo to ensure that Christians have the right to freely build or renovate their churches without discrimination, the human rights defender received a phone call from a person who identified themselves as an officer from the National Security Agency. In the call, the officer berated him for taking part in the protest and warned him that he may face problems if he organises or takes part in other protests. The next day, Ebram Louis was informally summoned again for interrogation, but his lawyer advised him not to go.

The restrictions imposed on Egyptian civil society and human rights defenders have been intensifying over recent years. Front Line Defenders is concerned at the denial of registration of the Foundation of the Victims of Abduction and Forced Disappearance and the effects this has on the work of the organisation.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Egypt to:

1. Permit the registration of the **Foundation of the Victims of Abduction and Forced Disappearance**, and ensure that it is able to operate freely without intimidation or

harassment of its members;

2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in **Egypt** are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.