

12 September 2017

Egypt – Human rights defender Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy arrested en route to meeting with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced Disappearances

On 10 September 2017, Egyptian authorities arrested human rights defender **Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy** at Cairo International Airport while he was on the way to attend a meeting with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced Disappearances.

Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy is a co-founder and the coordinator of the **Association of the Families of the Disappeared** in Egypt, a network of individuals whose loved ones have been subjected to enforced or involuntary disappearances. Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy became an active human rights defender working on the issue of enforced disappearances after the disappearance of his son Amr Ibrahim Metwally, who went missing on 8 July 2013. The human rights defender is the attorney in the case of Giulio Regeni, an Italian national who was killed in Egypt under suspicious circumstances. Since 2014, Ibrahim Hegazy has been actively lobbying Egyptian authorities on the issue of enforced disappearances in Egypt.

On 10 September 2017, Egyptian authorities arrested Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy at Cairo International Airport while he was on the way to attend a meeting with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced Disappearances, held between 11-15 September 2017 at the 36th session Human Rights Council in Geneva. Family members have not been informed of the whereabouts of Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy and he has not had access to a lawyer.

Fellow co-founder and member of the Association of the Families of the Disappeared, Hanan Badr El-Din Othman has been subjected to “*preventative detention*” by order of the Egyptian authorities since 6 May 2017. The human rights defender was [arrested](#) during a visit to Qanatar prison where she was seeking to find information on, and determine the fate or whereabouts of, her missing husband.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the arbitrary arrest and incommunicado detention of Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy as it believes that he is being held in reprisal for cooperation with the United Nations, its mechanisms and representatives in the field of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Egypt to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Inform the family and lawyer of Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy of the place of his detention, and allow them immediate and unfettered access to him;
3. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy;

4. Ensure that the treatment of Metwally Hegazy, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

5. 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 including judicial harassment.