

6 March 2018

Egypt: Two human rights defenders arrested

On 4 March human rights lawyer and executive director of the **Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF)**, **Ezzat Ghneim**, was detained by State Security in Cairo. The following day, the State Security Prosecution renewed the detention of **Ahmed Tarek Ibrahim Ziada** for an additional 15 days following his arrest on 18 February. He is under investigation on charges of "membership of a terrorist organization" and "publishing false news" in case No. 467 (2018).

[Ezzat Ghneim](#) is a human rights defender and lawyer focusing on fair trial guarantees and enforced disappearances. Since 2014, he has served as executive director of the Egyptian Coordination for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF), an Egyptian human rights organisation which works on arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, freedom of expression, medical negligence and torture inside prisons.

Ezzat Ghneim was arrested at 6.30 pm on 1 March 2018 and his whereabouts were undisclosed until 5 March 2018, when the defender's lawyer reported that he was being investigated by State Security Prosecution. On 4 March 2018, Ezzat Ghneim was interrogated by in Cairo in the absence of his legal representatives, despite the fact that they had been waiting until 11.00 pm on 3 March to represent the human rights defender. The detention center where he is being held remains unknown to his family and legal representatives.

Ezzat Ghneim has been added as a suspect in case No. 441 of 2018, known as the "media activism" case, along with a number of Egyptian journalists, including Hassan El-Banna Mubarak and Mustafa Al-Aasar, and Moataz Wadnan, whose investigative reporting aimed to expose high level corruption in the Egyptian government. The charges in the case include "membership of an unlawful organization".

[Ahmed Tarek Ibrahim Ziada](#) is a human rights defender and editor of "Minus 1095" a documentary film on human rights violations during the Egyptian revolution. On Monday, 5 March 2018, Egypt's State Security Prosecution renewed his detention for an additional 15 days.

The human rights defender was arrested by security forces at 3.00 am on 18 February 2018 at his family home in Nahia village in the Giza governorate. Security forces confiscated his mobile phone and computer, interrogated him for approximately one hour and then took him to an undisclosed location. He has been held in Egypt's State Security custody since that time. The human rights defender reported being subjected to "physical and mental torture" and on 21 February 2018, was interrogated in the absence of his lawyer.

Front Line Defenders condemns the judicial harassment of human rights defenders **Ezzat Ghneim** and **Ahmed Tarek Ibrahim Ziada** as it believes it to be in retaliation for their work in protecting and promoting human rights in Egypt.

Front Line Defenders calls upon the Egyptian authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Ezzat Ghneim and Ahmed Tarek Ibrahim Ziada;
2. Immediately halt the investigations against Ezzat Ghneim and Ahmed Tarek Ibrahim Ziada;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Egypt and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.