

M. Mahmoud Tawfik, Minister of Interior

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Dear Sir Mahmoud Tawfik,

Following information communicated by ANKH and ACAT-France, I am writing to express my concern over Eman Al-Helw and Hossam Ahmed's case. They were both arrested, alongside 70 others, on February 28, 2019, and are investigated under the Case 1739/2018. They were first detained in an undisclosed location for four days before appearing at the State Security Prosecution on March 4, 2019, on charges of participating in a terrorist group and using an internet account (Facebook) to commit a crime punishable by law.

On December 3, 2019, the Criminal Court of Cairo had granted their release under precautionary measures. However, on December 4, 2019, the Public Prosecution successfully appealed to the Criminal Court of Cairo's decision and so they have subsequently been sent back to preventive detention for an additional 45 days. Eman Al-Helw and Hossam Ahmed are being detained and facing numerous legal proceedings stemming solely from their peaceful activism. The way they are targeted with absurd charges, in this case, is consistent with a pattern of harassment.

Therefore I respectfully ask you to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Eman Al-Helw and Hossam Ahmed and the others detained under the Case 1739/2018 and drop all charges;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Eman Al-Helw and Hossam Ahmed, 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;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all political activists and artists in Egypt are able to carry out their legitimate activities and express themselves freely without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

In the meantime, please accept, Sir, the expression of my high consideration.

Please note that a copy of this letter has been sent to:

His Excellency M. Alaa Youssef

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