

# URGENT ACTION

## DETAINED LAWYER DENIED ADEQUATE HEALTH CARE

Human rights lawyer and former parliamentarian, Zyad el-Elaimy, is being denied adequate health care by the Tora prison authorities, amid concerns that his underlying medical conditions put him at particular risk if exposed to COVID-19. Zyad has been arbitrarily detained for over a year, along with journalists and politicians, Hossam Moanis and Hisham Fouad, and 12 others over charges that relate to their peaceful political activities.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

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Dear Counsellor,

Amid rising fears over the spread of COVID-19 in Egypt's overcrowded prisons, prisoner of conscience **Zyad el-Elaimy's** health is at risk, as he suffers from sarcoidosis, asthma, hypertension and diabetes. Despite this, the prison authorities deny him access to adequate health care. According to a doctor with knowledge of his medical history, Zyad managed his health conditions before being imprisoned through regular diagnostic tests and adjustment of the dose of appropriate medications. However, his health has not been monitored on a regular basis during incarceration as prison authorities persistently refuse requests by his family and lawyers to conduct comprehensive medical evaluations. Zyad has also been denied medication for pericardial effusion, a condition he developed in prison. Without the proper diagnosis and treatment, Zyad's health is at risk of further deterioration.

Moreover, Zyad has been denied access to his lawyer and family since the Egyptian authorities suspended all prison visits on 10 March as a measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 but failed to ensure regular alternative means of communication.

Zyad is facing three separate criminal proceedings as a result of his political activism. On 25 June 2019, security forces arbitrarily detained Zyad (in relation to case 930/2019, known as the "Hope case") on charges connected to his peaceful political activities. On 18 April 2020, the terrorism circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court included Zyad and 12 other detainees on Egypt's "terrorism" lists for five years in relation to case 571/2020. The effect of the decision includes travel bans, asset freezes, and prohibition of political activities. On 2 June 2020, a higher court judge upheld his conviction and sentence in relation to case 684/2020 for conducting an interview with BBC Arabic on the human rights situation in Egypt.

**I therefore ask you to immediately and unconditionally release Zyad el-Elaimy, Hossam Moanis, Hisham Fouad and other individuals detained in case 930/2019, as their detention is arbitrary and solely based on the peaceful exercise of their human rights. I call on you to also ensure that all the charges against them are dropped, and the decision to include Zyad el-Elaimy on the "terrorism" list rescinded. Pending their release, I urge you to ensure that Zyad el-Elaimy and the other detainees are provided with adequate health care and the means to regularly communicate with their families and lawyers.**

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has documented the arrest of 15 individuals in case 930/2019 known as “Hope case”. The list of detainees includes **Zyad el-Elaimy**, a former parliamentarian, human rights lawyer and one of the leaders of the Egyptian Social Democratic party, journalist and spokesperson for the leftist Popular Current party **Hossam Moanis**, journalist, trade unionist and socialist politician **Hisham Fouad**, as well as 12 others arrested on separate dates between 9 June and 11 July. At least seven have been subjected to enforced disappearances, while at least eight were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment including electric shocks, beatings and threats. Amnesty International is aware of 105 individuals being investigated in the case; many of them are currently detained.

The individuals in the case are currently held in pre-trial detention pending investigations by the Supreme State Security Prosecution into unfounded charges of “aiding a terrorist group”, “membership in a terrorist group” and “spreading false information”, in addition to other charges. The charges relate to legitimate activities including participation in public affairs, peaceful expression and defending human rights.

The case came to light on 25 June 2019, when the ministry of interior announced in a statement that it had uncovered “a joint plot between the Muslim Brotherhood’s exiled leadership and the civil opposition [in Egypt] to target the state and its institutions in order to oust it on 30 June.” The statement refers to the involvement of several Muslim Brotherhood and opposition figures abroad, as well as the arrest of an unspecified number of individuals inside Egypt, including eight mentioned by name.

Egypt has seen a rise in the number of detainees being held in pre-trial detention for months and sometimes years over terrorism-related charges, in many cases based on police investigations alone. Two months after the amendment of Law 8/2015 on Terrorist Entities and Terrorists in February 2020, a terrorism circuit in Cairo’s Criminal Court included Zyad and 12 other individuals in Egypt’s “terrorism” lists for five years. The recent amendments give the Public Prosecutor the power to submit to courts lists of entities and persons to be designated as “terrorists” regardless of whether an alleged “terrorist act” has actually occurred and based only on “police investigation or information”. Zyad was added to the list without any hearings or due process. Zyad’s lawyer appealed the court decision.

The Egyptian authorities have orchestrated a brutal crackdown on critics and opponents from across the whole political spectrum, from supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood to leftist or liberal activists, and even supporters of former President Hosni Mubarak. The crackdown has also targeted journalists, lawyers, doctors, staff of civil society organizations, and the general public, including football fans and individuals voicing criticism to economic or social conditions. These arrests are effectively turning Egypt into an open-air prison with no opposition, critics or independent reporting allowed.

Amnesty International believes that these arrests are directly related to a coalition’s plans to unite secular parties ahead of parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in April-May 2020. The arrests follow a similar pattern observed in 2017 ahead of the 2018 presidential elections when the Egyptian authorities launched an unprecedented crackdown on political opponents and critics that culminated with the arrest of President al-Sisi’s contenders and their supporters. Egypt has amended its constitution in 2019 pushing back the date of the presidential election to 2024 instead of 2022, effectively allowing President al-Sisi to stay in power until 2030.

### **PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Arabic and English

You can also write in your own language.

### **PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 24 August 2020.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Zyad El-Elaimy, Hossam Moanis, Hisham Fouad (preferred pronouns)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/0839/2019/en/>