

URGENT ACTION

EGYPTIAN-BRITISH ACTIVIST STILL UNJUSTLY JAILED

Egyptian-British prominent activist Alaa Abdel Fattah remains arbitrarily detained in Wadi al-Natrun prison and denied access to consular visits. On 20 July, human rights lawyer Mohamed Baker was released after 45 months of arbitrary detention, stemming solely from his peaceful human rights work, following a presidential pardon on 19 July. Mohamed Baker was arrested on 29 September 2019 from the Supreme State Security Prosecution's office where he went to represent Alaa Abdel Fattah who had been arrested earlier that day. Both had been subjected to a litany of human rights violations including prolonged arbitrary detention, unfair trial, torture and other ill-treatment, and periodic bans on family visits. Alaa Abdel Fattah should be immediately and unconditionally released as his detention is solely linked to the peaceful exercise of his human rights.

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

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Office of the President Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg
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Your Excellency,

We welcome the release on 20 July of Egyptian human rights defender and lawyer **Mohamed Baker** after nearly four years of arbitrary detention following Your Excellency's pardon on 19 July, noting that he should not have spent a single day behind bars and that he should be provided with access to a remedy for the harm suffered. Further, I am concerned that prominent activist **Alaa Abdel Fattah** continues to be unjustly imprisoned, since September 2019, solely for the exercise of his human rights. On 20 December 2021, an Emergency State Security Court convicted him on bogus charges including "spreading false news" and sentenced him five years' imprisonment, following a grossly unfair trial. Alaa Abdel Fattah, who has spent most of the last decade arbitrarily detained, has been subjected to a catalogue of human rights violations including torture and other ill-treatment, prolonged arbitrary detention, unfair trial, denial of family visits and detention in cruel and inhuman conditions.

According to his sister, who visited him in July, Alaa Abdel Fattah's conditions of detention in Wadi al-Natrun prison and mental health have improved. However, visits continue to take place behind a separating glass making it impossible for him to hug his loved ones. Authorities are also denying him access to his lawyers and consular visits as well as phone calls to his family. During family visits, Alaa Abdel Fattah has been expressing his extreme frustration about the lack of consular visits by British authorities, despite his and his family's repeated requests.

I urge you to release Alaa Abdel Fattah immediately and unconditionally, as he is detained solely for peacefully exercising his human rights. Pending his release, he must have regular access to his lawyers, family and adequate healthcare and be held in conditions that meet international standards for the treatment of prisoners. He must be granted a consular visit without further delay. Furthermore, I urge you to ensure that Mohamed Baker is granted access to a remedy for the harm suffered during his 45 months of arbitrarily detention.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Alaa Abdel Fattah, a well-known political activist and government critic, has been repeatedly arrested in the past decade including for his role in the 2011 uprising. Mohamed Baker is a human rights lawyer and director of Adalah Center for Rights and Freedoms, which he founded in 2014. Mohamed Baker and Alaa Abdel Fattah were arrested on 29 September 2019 and ordered into pre-trial detention pending investigations into bogus terrorism-related charges under Case No.1356/2019 of the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP), a branch of the Public Prosecution specialized in investigating national security threats. The SSSP opened investigations into similar charges against them under new Case No. 1228/2021 as part of a strategy increasingly used by the authorities, referred to as "rotation", to circumvent the two-year limit for pre-trial detention allowed under Egyptian law and to indefinitely extend the detention of activists. Their trial in Case No. 1228/2021 started on 28 October 2021, together with another defendant: blogger and activist Mohamed Ibrahim Radwan "Oxygen", who was also convicted on charges of "spreading false news" in relation to social media posts and sentenced to four years' imprisonment. Proceedings before emergency courts are inherently unfair as their verdicts are not subject to appeal by a higher tribunal. Defence lawyers were prevented from communicating with defendants in private and photocopying the casefiles and indictments. On 3 January 2022, the president ratified the verdict against all three. A document seen by Amnesty International indicated that the sentence commenced from the date of ratification, rather than from the date of their arrests.

Alaa Abdel Fattah and Mohamed Baker were held in inhumane conditions at the Tora Maximum Security 2 Prison, in Cairo from September 2019 to May and October 2022, respectively. Prison authorities held them in small, poorly ventilated cells and have denied them beds and mattresses. The prison authorities also denied them reading materials, exercise in the prison yard, adequate clothing, radios, watches, access to hot water and any personal belongings, including family photos. On 12 May 2022, Alaa Abdel Fattah told his mother that he was beaten while handcuffed by the deputy prison warden at Tora Maximum Security 2 prison. On 18 May 2022, he was transferred to Wadi al-Natrun Prison after significant public pressure. On 2 October 2022, Mohamed Baker was transferred to Badr 1 prison, where prisoners complain about being under constant camera surveillance and bombarded with fluorescent lights. On 10 April 2023, authorities in Badr 1 prison stripped, beat and otherwise abused Mohamed Baker and subsequently placed him in solitary confinement. Authorities also arbitrarily arrested Neama Hisham, Mohamed Baker's wife, on 17 April and held her for some 13 hours, after she reported on his assault.

Since the President's reactivation of the Presidential Pardons Committee in April 2022, the Egyptian authorities released high-profile prisoners of conscience and hundreds of others held for political reasons. However, thousands remain arbitrarily detained solely for exercising their human rights, or following grossly unfair trials, or without legal basis. Before the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27), hundreds were arrested and ordered into pre-detention pending investigations in connection to their calls for peaceful protests on 11 November. During COP27, a chorus of voices called on the Egyptian authorities to release Alaa Abdel Fattah who was on hunger strike for seven months when the event started on 6 November 2022. For instance, on 8 November, expressing deep regret at his ongoing detention, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, called for his immediate release and urged the authorities to provide him with the necessary healthcare. Alaa Abdel Fattah began his hunger strike on 2 April 2022 to protest his unjust imprisonment and denial of consular visits. On 1 November 2022, he escalated his hunger strike and stopped consuming the 100 calories he had been consuming since April and on 6 November 2022 he stopped drinking water. On 11 November 2022, Alaa Abdel Fattah lost consciousness in the shower, and when he regained it, he was held by a cellmate, surrounded by a large crowd and had a tube inserted into his body. Following this near-death experience, he decided not to resume his hunger strike immediately, but vowed to continue if "there continues to be no real movement on his case".

On 24 March 2023, the UN Human Rights Committee [published](#) its concluding observations on Egypt's compliance with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights highlighting several issues raised since 2013 by Amnesty International and other Egyptian and international human rights groups, including arbitrary detention and abuse of counterterrorism legislation to silence actual or perceived critics of the Egyptian authorities.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic or English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 3 October 2023

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Alaa Abdel Fattah (he/him), Mohamed Baker (he/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/6692/2023/en/>