

# URGENT ACTION

## UNJUSTLY JAILED ACTIVIST TRIED ON BOGUS TERRORISM CHARGES

Marwa Arafa, Egyptian human rights activist and translator, has been arbitrarily detained for nearly six years solely in relation to her activism, including supporting relatives of detainees. In December 2024, the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) referred her to trial before the Cairo Criminal Court on bogus charges of joining and financing a terrorist organization. On 20 April 2020, security forces arrested Marwa Arafa from her apartment in Cairo without presenting an arrest warrant; and subsequently subjected her to enforced disappearance for 14 days. Marwa Arafa was arrested in front of her then 2-year-old daughter, causing her child significant trauma. Marwa Arafa's health has severely deteriorated in prison. Despite this, authorities are refusing her the medical care she needs. Egyptian authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Marwa Arafa and drop all charges against her as she is detained solely for exercising her human rights.

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

**Public Prosecutor Mohamed Shawky Ayyad**

Office of the Public Prosecutor, Madinat al-Rehab  
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt; Fax: +202 2577 4716; X: @EgyptianPPO

Dear Counsellor,

*I write to express my grave concern over the prolonged arbitrary detention of human rights activist Marwa Arafa, aged 33, who has been in pre-trial detention for nearly six years solely for exercising her human rights, including providing support for families of individuals detained for political reasons. On 20 April 2020, security forces raided Marwa Arafa's house in Nasr City, Cairo, and arrested her in front of her then two-year-old daughter, causing her child significant trauma, compounded by her mother's prolonged imprisonment. Security forces forcibly disappeared her for 14 days while her family desperately sought information about her fate and whereabouts, including by appealing to the Public Prosecutor and Minister of Interior. On 4 May 2020, she appeared before the SSSP in Case No.570 and was interrogated on unfounded accusations of "joining a terrorist group and financing terrorism". Since then, Marwa Arafa's pre-trial detention was renewed in contravention to Egyptian law, which sets a two-year limit for pre-trial detention. In December 2024, Marwa Arafa was referred to trial along with 38 others on bogus terrorism-related charges, stemming from her peaceful activism. Her rights to a fair trial have been violated, including her right to adequate defence. Prison authorities in 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan prison are denying her access to her lawyer. Her next hearing is scheduled for 15 February 2026.*

*Marwa Arafa's health has gravely deteriorated following her unjust imprisonment. According to her mother, in August 2025, she suffered from a pulmonary embolism due to extreme heat and severe anaemia. She was unable to move independently and was experiencing breathing difficulties. Despite this, authorities returned her to her cell after only one night at the prison hospital, without completing her diagnosis and treatment. According to an independent doctor consulted by the family, she needs a Cardiac Doppler ultrasound and contrast imaging, which are not available at the prison hospital. Multiple requests from her family and lawyer to transfer her to an appropriate medical facility outside prison were rejected by the SSSP.*

***I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Marwa Arafa and drop all charges against her, as she is detained solely for exercising her human rights. Pending her release, she must be held in conditions meeting international standards for the treatment of prisoners and granted access to adequate healthcare, including in outside hospitals, if necessary, as well as her family and lawyers.***

Yours sincerely,

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Marwa Arafa is a translator and human rights defender who provided support for family members of individuals detained for political reasons. Her assistance encompassed helping families with the costs of prison visits. She was also involved in advocating for children's rights. She was arrested in front of her then two-year-old daughter who was later diagnosed with being on the autism spectrum. Marwa Arafa unjust imprisonment deprives her daughter of her mother's presence and care.

Marwa Arafa's first trial session in front of the terrorism circuit of the Cairo Criminal Court was held on 6 July 2025 after over five years of pre-trial arbitrary detention. According to the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), an independent human rights organization, the court [postponed](#) the hearing to 18 October 2025 to enable the lawyers to review the casefile. Her lawyers had been denied access to her casefile from the investigation stage until after the first court hearing. During the hearing on 18 October 2025, Marwa Arafa appeared in court in a state of visible fatigue with marked respiratory distress. The presiding judge adjourned the hearing to 20 December 2025 based on the defence's request to question and cross examine prosecution witnesses. On 20 December 2025, the court questioned prosecution witnesses namely policemen involved in investigations in her case. The session was adjourned to 15 February 2026 to question the remaining prosecution witnesses. Amnesty International has repeatedly raised concerns about fair trial violations in proceedings by terrorism circuits, including violations to the right to a fair and public hearing by a competent, impartial and independent tribunal and the right to adequate defence and equality of arms.

Marwa Arafa was detained in Al-Qanater women's prison from April 2020 until her transfer to 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan prison in July 2023. According to information gathered by Amnesty International, Al-Qanater prison officials refused to intervene when she was subjected to abuse by other prisoners and repeatedly denied her requests to work in prison workshops in return for financial remuneration. Since August 2025, 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan prison authorities have been denying Marwa Arafa her right to daily exercise, in contravention to Egyptian prison regulations and international standards on the treatment of prisoners. According to an independent doctor consulted by her family, daily exercise is critical for her to prevent future blood clots and a further degradation of her health.

In August 2025, Marwa Arafa suffered from pulmonary embolism, which was resolved after anticoagulant injections. Subsequent examinations revealed a heart condition requiring further diagnostic tests to determine whether she requires cardiac catheterization or medication-based treatment as assessed by an independent doctor consulted by her family. Prison authorities continue to deny her family's requests to transfer her to outside hospitals to complete the necessary diagnosis and treatment.

According to information gathered by Amnesty International, 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan prison authorities have also been preventing Marwa Arafa from continuing her postgraduate studies and sitting her exams. Since 2023, her family has filed repeated petitions requesting permission from the Public Prosecution and prison authorities for her to sit the exams. All requests were rejected by officials at 10<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan Prison.

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

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** 6 June 2026

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

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Marwa Arafa (She/Her).

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UA:** First UA