



**CAIRO INSTITUTE  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES**  
Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme  
مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

**Human Rights Council: 31<sup>st</sup> session**

**Item 3: Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders**

**Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)**

**4 March 2016**

**Delivered by: Richard Alam**

**Thank you, Mr. /Ms. President.**

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, in cooperation with 15 Egyptian partner organizations, notes the communications of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) to the government of Egypt concerning escalating attacks against HRDs, including the increasing use of a repressive NGO law and other infamous legislations to open investigations against rights organizations and impose travel bans on individuals.

We are gravely concerned by the unprecedented levels of repressive measures being used by the government against human rights organizations and defenders. These measures form part of a larger effort by the government to shut down the public space and stifle civil society.

Egyptian rights defenders - including women human rights defenders, journalists, and academics - are subjected to a wide range of violations by the government, from travel bans and threats of physical attacks, to legal prosecution and imprisonment.

The judicial authorities have revived the infamous foreign funding case against NGOs. At least 13 defenders were banned from travelling since the beginning of 2015, including – most recently – **Hossam Bahgat**, the prominent rights defender, **Gamal Eid**, the director of the ANHRI, and **Esraa Abdel Fattah** from the board of the Egyptian Democratic Academy.

Several defenders have been subjected to prolonged pre-trial detention. Human rights defender **Aya Hegazy** and seven others have been detained for nearly two years on what appear to be fabricated charges. **Hisham Gaafar**, the president of the board of trustees for Mada for Media Development has been detained since October 2015, facing charges of “receipt of foreign funding.” Moreover, **Mahinour El-Masry**, **Gameela Ahmed Sareyy**, **Shaimaa Ahmed Saad** and **Abeer Mostafa** and several other activists including **Alaa Abdel Fattah**, **Ahmed Maher** and **Ahmed Doma** are serving prison sentences for participating in peaceful protests.

We repeat our call for Egypt to release all those in detention or imprisoned for no more than exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

Finally we would like to ask the Special Rapporteur if he has requested an official visit to Egypt, and, if so, why has such a visit not yet occurred and how does he intend to respond to the deteriorating human rights situation in Egypt in case he is still denied entry to Egypt?

**Signatures:**

- 1. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies**
- 2. ADALAH Center for Rights & Freedoms “ACRF”**
- 3. Alhaqanya Foundation of Rights and freedoms**
- 4. Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies**
- 5. Arab Network for Human Rights Information**
- 6. Arab Penal Reform Organization**
- 7. Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression**
- 8. Center for Egyptian Women’s Legal Assistance**
- 9. Egyptian Commission for rights and freedoms**
- 10. El-Nadeem Centre for the rehabilitation of victims of violence and torture**
- 11. Foundation Of The Victims Of Abduction And Forced Disappearance**
- 12. Masryoon Against Religious Discrimination**
- 13. National Community for Human Rights and Law**
- 14. Nazra for Feminist Studies**
- 15. The Egyptian Association for Community Participation Enhancement**
- 16. The Egyptian Center for Public Policy Studies**
- 17. The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights**