



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, 45th Session

Item 5 – Interactive Dialogue on the Secretary General’s Report on Reprisals

Oral Intervention

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies

30 September 2020

Delivered by: Nada Awad

Thank you Madam President,

CIHRS would like to thank the Assistant Secretary General and her team for the important work they carry out on the issue of reprisals.

On the 25th of August, the Director of CIHRS, Bahey eldin Hassan, was [sentenced](#) to 15 years’ imprisonment *in absentia* by the Fifth Terrorism Circuit Court in Cairo.

The evidence and charges against him constitute a clear and grave case of reprisal for cooperation and engagement with the United Nations. Mr. Hassan’s case file specifically charges him with “portrayal of a negative image of Egypt before the international community” and spreading false information to undermine national security - citing as evidence his participation at the UN Human Rights Council.

The verdict against Mr. Hassan is only the latest example of Egypt’s systematic use of reprisals against those who engage with United Nations human rights mechanisms. Special Procedure mandate holders and your office [have repeatedly condemned this pattern of reprisals](#), including its use [of terrorism related charges to punish individuals for such work](#). The brutality and regularity of such attacks should shock this Council into action- people have been kidnapped, tortured and imprisoned, families have had their homes demolished.

Mr. Hassan’s case not only indicates an unwillingness by Egyptian authorities to begin to address this policy but also represents a symbolic escalation of this behavior against one of Egypt’s most visible human rights defenders.

Allowing Egypt to continue to escape meaningful scrutiny for these acts will deeply erode the foundations of the international human rights system and encourage ever more brutal and widespread forms of reprisals by Egypt and other governments around the world.