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EGYPT

MOTHER'S LIFE AT RISK WHILE PROTESTING SON'S UNJUST DETENTION

Egyptian-British activist Alaa Abdel Fattah remains in prison, even though he finished his unfair five-year sentence on September 29, 2024. His 68-year-old mother, Laila Soueif, has been on a hunger strike since then to demand his release.

On February 24, after 149 days without food, she was hospitalized. Doctors found her blood sugar and blood pressure at dangerously low levels. A medical examination on February 25 confirmed that her life is in critical danger.

Alaa Abdel Fattah has spent most of the past 10 years in prison. He has faced numerous human rights violations, including unfair trials, torture, and inhumane treatment. He is a prisoner of conscience, jailed only for exercising his rights. He must be freed immediately and unconditionally.

Write to the President of Egypt urging him to:

- Release Alaa Abdel Fattah immediately and unconditionally, as he is detained solely for exercising his human rights.
- Until his release, ensure he has regular access to his lawyers, family, and adequate healthcare.
- Guarantee that he is held in conditions that meet international standards for the treatment of prisoners.
- Grant him consular access without further delay.

Write to:

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
Office of the President Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt;
Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg
Twitter/X: @AlsisiOfficial

Salutation: Dear President,

And copy:

His Excellency Ahmed Abdallah Ibrahim Hafez
Ambassador
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
454 Laurier Avenue East
Ottawa, ON K1N 6R3
Tel: (613) 234-4931, 4935 Fax: (613) 234-9347/234-4398
Email: egyptembottawa@gmail.com

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Alaa Abdel Fattah, a well-known political activist and critic of the Egyptian government, has faced repeated arrests over the past decade. He played a key role in the 2011 uprising and has been targeted ever since.

On September 29, 2019, National Security Agency (NSA) officers arrested him at a police station in Greater Cairo, where he was required to spend every night as part of his probation. He had been released in March 2019 after serving an unjust five-year prison sentence. That same day, human rights lawyer Mohamed Baker was arrested while attending an investigation session for Alaa.

Both men were placed in pre-trial detention under false terrorism-related charges in Case No. 1356/2019. Later, authorities opened another case against them, Case No. 1228/2021, using a practice known as "rotation" to bypass the two-year legal limit on pre-trial detention. Their trial began on October 28, 2021, alongside activist and blogger Mohamed Ibrahim Radwan, known as "Oxygen." Baker and Oxygen were convicted of "spreading false news" over social media posts and sentenced to four years in prison. The emergency court that sentenced them denied their right to appeal. Lawyers were also blocked from privately communicating with their clients or accessing case files.

From September 2019 to May 2022, Alaa Abdel Fattah was held in Tora Maximum Security 2 Prison under harsh conditions. He was kept in a small, poorly ventilated cell without a bed or mattress. Authorities denied him reading materials, outdoor exercise, adequate clothing, and even personal belongings like family photos.

On May 12, 2022, he told his mother he had been beaten while handcuffed by a deputy prison warden. Six days later, following public pressure, he was transferred to Wadi al-Natroun Prison.

In protest of his imprisonment and the denial of consular visits, he began a hunger strike on April 2, 2022. By November 1, he stopped consuming the 100 calories he had been surviving on. On November 6, during the UN Climate Change Conference (COP27), he escalated his strike and stopped drinking water. Five days later, he lost consciousness in the shower and had a tube inserted into his body. After this near-death experience, he paused his hunger strike but vowed to continue if no real action was taken on his case.

On July 19, 2023, after nearly four years of arbitrary detention, Mohamed Baker received a presidential pardon following sustained pressure from supporters. Since April 2022, the Egyptian government has released some high-profile prisoners and others jailed for political reasons. However, thousands remain behind bars for exercising their basic rights, enduring unfair trials, or being detained without legal basis.

During COP27, voices from around the world, including UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, urged Egypt to release Alaa Abdel Fattah. Despite these calls, he remains imprisoned.

On February 21, 2025, 25 Egyptian and international civil society organizations, including Amnesty International, sent a joint letter to the UK government. They urged stronger pressure on Egypt to secure his release during the upcoming 58th session of the UN Human Rights Council, taking place from February 24 to April 4.

Please take action as soon as possible until August 27, 2025. The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.