



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

WITH LAWYERS
IN 18 COUNTRIES

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt
EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo
EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme
EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

Equality Privacy Social Rights
No Racism Peace No Torture No War
Self-Determination of Peoples Civil Rights Democracy
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

London/Düsseldorf, 03 January 2017

Appeal to the Egyptian Government - Respect the rights of Egyptian lawyers

DAY OF THE ENDANGERED LAWYER – 24 January 2017

The Day of the Endangered Lawyer is the day on which we call for attention to lawyers who are being **harassed, silenced, pressured, threatened, persecuted, and tortured**. Even **murders** and **disappearances** are not out of the ordinary. In many cases the only reason for these outrages is the fact that these lawyers are doing their job, and carrying out its professional obligations, when needed the most.

The 24th of January was chosen to be the annual International Day of the Endangered Lawyer because on this day in 1977 four lawyers and a co-worker were murdered at their address at Calle Atocha 55 in Madrid. This was also known as the Massacre of Atocha. In the recent years beginning in 2010 special attention on the Day of the Endangered Lawyer was paid to the fate of fellow lawyers in Iran, Turkey, Basque-Country (Spain), Colombia, the Philippines and Honduras.

In 2017 ELDH, with members in 18 countries, will focus its activities on the endangered lawyers in Egypt. Many human rights organisations, among them Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, IDHAE, and the International Commission of Jurists confirm that the Egyptian authorities have moved beyond scaremongering and are now rapidly taking concrete steps to shut down the last critical voices in the country's human rights community. Egypt is going through the most serious human rights crisis in its history. Every day security forces arbitrarily displace 3 or 4 people (AI Secretary General, 18 Dec. 2016).

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Today in Egypt, human rights activists, lawyers, and journalists, all have to live with their phone calls being tapped, and with intimidation and threats from the authorities. After the overthrow of President Mohammed Morsi the human rights situation has deteriorated dramatically. The government has restricted severely freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association. The authorities have taken harsh actions against dissidents, ten thousands have been arbitrarily arrested, and many of them tortured during custody. Security forces who killed demonstrators have not been held accountable. After harsh unfair trials, hundreds of people have received prison or even death sentences. Victims of this persecution include not only alleged members and supporters of the Muslim brotherhood but also any other opponents to the present government, in particular alleged members of left organisations and human rights activists.

Some prominent examples of endangered lawyers and human rights defenders in Egypt are

- Dr. Ahmad Abdallah, human rights defender, representing the family of Italian student Giulio Regeni who was tortured and murdered in Cairo, chairperson of the board of the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECRF)
- Malek Adly a human rights lawyer working for the Egyptian Centre for Economic and Social Rights (ECESR) and co-founder of the Front of Defence for Egyptian Protesters (FDEP).
- Hossam Baghat, Cairo, a human rights defender
- Negad al-Boraei, Cairo, a lawyer
- Gamal Eid, a human rights lawyer, Executive Director of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI)
- Mahinour al-Masry, Alexandria, a Lawyer and member of Revolutionary Socialist Party; in 2014 she received the renowned “Ludovic-Trarieux-Prize” a human rights prize which is awarded once a year by a large group of European Bar Associations
- Haitham Mohamedein, a labour lawyer
- Yara Sallam , Cairo, a lawyer, feminist, human rights activist and researcher in the Transitional Justice Unit
- Azza Soliman, Cairo, a lawyer and leading women’s rights defender. She was arrested, because she had born witness against police officers, who shot a demonstrator; and because the centre for the legal aid for women which was co-founded by her allegedly received financial support from abroad.

ELDH demands that the Egyptian government should:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release and compensate all detained lawyers and other human rights activists
2. Drop all charges against these lawyers and other human rights activists, as these prosecutions are clearly aimed at hindering their peaceful human rights activities
3. Comply with all the provisions of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, 27 August to 7 September 1990,
4. Comply with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders from 1998

ELDH also requests the European Union to exert pressure upon the Egyptian government by economic sanctions, in particular the discontinuation of arms supply, in order to make it respect human rights. Under no circumstances must there be a refugee agreement similar to that with Turkey. Because neither Turkey nor Egypt are safe third countries.