



**THEY ARE NOT
PRISONERS—
THEY ARE
CAPTIVES**



**Statement from a Group of
International Human Rights Organizations**

Legal Campaign in Solidarity with Captives in Egyptian Prisons

June 15, 2026

Launching the Campaign: "Freedom Captives in Egypt"

For more than ten years, the term "prisoners of conscience" has been used to describe the condition of tens of thousands of inmates behind bars in Egypt. However, this description is no longer accurate — in fact, it has come to obscure a bitter reality. In legal convention, a "prisoner" is someone detained under the law, who appeared before the prosecution upon arrest, was tried before a fair judiciary, and was released upon completion of their sentence. What is happening in Egyptian prisons today, however, is a process of open-ended political detention that operates entirely outside the bounds of any law.

On this basis, the Justice for Human Rights Organization and the undersigned organizations hereby announce — coinciding with the 62nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council — the launch of the campaign "Freedom Captives in Egyptian Prisons", under the slogan: "They Are Not Prisoners — They Are Captives."

The number of those detained for political reasons in Egypt exceeds 60,000 individuals, with more than 3,000 documented "rotation" cases — a mechanism condemned by the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention for its incompatibility with the right to trial within a reasonable period of time.

This campaign is not merely a record of new violations — it is a necessary human rights step to call things by their true names. The arbitrary measures that consume the years of thousands of dissidents and opinion activists clearly reveal that we are confronting a system that has taken its victims hostage, running prisons as political internment camps through fixed and systematic mechanisms, most notably:

Sham trials: Used as legal cover to justify indefinite continued imprisonment.

The rotation policy: Employed as an open-ended detention mechanism to re-arrest victims immediately upon the issuance of a release order or the completion of their sentence.

Denial of medicine and visitation: Practiced as a deliberate daily method of torment, designed to break the will of detainees and push them toward a slow death.

Based on this reality, treating these victims as mere "prisoners" lends false legitimacy to their conditions of detention. They are captives of conscience and conviction, and our responsibility today is to impose this true characterization before the local and international community and before the human conscience.



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STATEMENT FROM A COALITION OF
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

To achieve this goal, we call upon human rights defenders, all human rights organizations, and media platforms to join the campaign and adopt its discourse — to end the falsification of labels and champion the dignity of the freedom captives.

Accordingly, we launch this campaign anchored in fundamental demands that are indivisible, representing the minimum threshold for ending this human tragedy:

1. Immediate abolition of the "rotation" policy

And the immediate release of all those who have completed their sentences or received release orders — as their re-arrest constitutes a fully formed crime of abduction.

2. Abolition of open-ended pre-trial detention

And a return to its legal basis as a temporary exceptional measure — not a disguised political punishment that extends for years without limit.

3.

Opening prisons to independent international monitoring

By immediately granting specialized international committees and independent human rights organizations access to detention facilities, and halting the policy of systematic torment.

4. Prosecution of those responsible and an end to impunity

Holding accountable all those who participated in engineering this captivity system — from decision-makers to those who implement policies of torture and starvation inside the cells.

5. Guaranteeing the right to a fair trial.

6. Improving conditions inside prisons, ensuring medical and health care, and opening visitation rights that have been denied to some captives for years.

Join us and support the campaign using the hashtag:

#Freedom_Captives_in_Egypt

1-Justice for Human Rights Organization - Turkey

2- EFDI International Organization - Belgium

3- Association of Victims of Torture - Geneva

4- Human Rights Monitor - London

5- Tawasol for Human Rights - Netherlands

6- Council of Egyptians' Rights - Geneva

7- AlKarama for Human Rights - Geneva

8- Free Voice for Human Rights Organization - Paris

9- Human Rights Solidarity Organization - Geneva

10- CEDAR Center for Legal Studies - Lebanon

Signatory Organizations:

