



INCLO calls for the immediate release of Egyptian human rights leaders

EIPR director and staff arrested following meeting with European and Canadian diplomats

21 November 2020

Thirteen (13) [INCLO](#) members are deeply concerned about this week’s arrest and detention of three friends and colleagues who work for the *Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)*, a founding member organization of INCLO.

We call for their immediate and unconditional release.

Gasser Abdel Razek, Executive Director, Karim Ennarah, Criminal Justice Unit Director, and Mohammed Basheer, Administrative Manager at EIPR were [arrested by the Egyptian security](#) forces and baselessly suspected of:

- "Joining a terrorist group with knowledge of its purposes";
- "Using a personal account on the internet to spread false information that undermines public security"; and
- "Broadcasting false news and statements that undermine public security and harm public interest".

These unjustified arrests come just two weeks after EIPR [met with 13 ambassadors](#) and accredited diplomats from the UK, Canada, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Denmark, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland and Switzerland, to discuss improving human rights in Egypt.

They also follow the arrest and subsequent torture of [Patrick George Zaki](#), EIPR's Gender and Human Rights Researcher, in February. He had been on leave since August 2019 to study for a postgraduate degree in Italy, and was returning for a brief family visit when he was arrested.

These ambassadors and diplomats as well as other countries must stand with EIPR and support our call for our colleagues' immediate release.

These arrests represent a clear and coordinated attack against EIPR's crucial work to promote and protect human rights, most recently EIPR's monitoring of conditions at prisons and places of detention, particularly during Covid-19, and its monitoring of the unprecedented surge in the issuing and execution of death sentences.

As human rights and civil liberties organizations, it is a normal and necessary part of our work to meet with a wide range of diplomats, politicians and officials in order to promote human rights standards, hold states accountable to the international human rights treaties they have ratified and ensure human rights are protected at the national level. This is the work of EIPR in Egypt and this work should not be criminalized; it should be respected and protected.

Arresting leading Egyptian human rights defenders represents an inexcusable attempt to silence their vital voices and to intimidate others in Egypt who work to promote and protect human rights. We strongly condemn this attempt to undermine the integrity of our colleagues who work tirelessly and selflessly to promote the human rights principles that are so fundamental to democracy and the rule of law.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of our colleagues at EIPR. Based on Egypt's human rights record, we are extremely worried that EIPR staff will not receive due process and fair trial rights.

INCLLO members fully agree with the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights](#) on 20 November announcing: "that these recent arrests and detentions are part of a broader pattern of intimidating organizations defending human rights and of the use of counter-terrorism and national security legislation to silence dissent.

"The use of sweeping counter-terrorism laws and vague charges such as "joining a terrorist organization" and "spreading false information" to harass and criminalize the work of human rights defenders is inconsistent with the rule of law and Egypt's obligations under international human rights law.

"We are very concerned that the targeting of human rights defenders and other activists, as well as further restrictions on freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly imposed in the country, are having a profound chilling effect on an already weakened Egyptian civil society."

We stand in full solidarity with our friends and colleagues and call on the Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Gasser Abdel-Razek, Karim Ennarah, Mohammed Basheer and Patrick George Zaki.

INCLLO is a network of 15 independent, national human rights organizations. Learn more at incllo.net

Signatories:

Agora International Human Rights Group (Russia)

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA)

Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS, Argentina)

DeJusticia (Colombia)

Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC, Australia)

Human Rights Law Network (HRLN, India)

Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU)

Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)

Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)

KontraS (Indonesia)

Legal Resources Centre (LRC, South Africa)

Liberty (United Kingdom)