

AD%D8%A7%D8%B2%D9%85-%D8%B9%D8%A8%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B8%D9%8A%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%B6%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A-%D9%82%D9%84%D9%82-%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B4%D9%86%D8%B7%D9%86) (SSSP) ordered him detained for 15 days pending investigations and charged him with “joining an unlawful terrorist group” and “publishing and spreading false news.”

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), an independent rights group, reported that (<http://anhri.net/escalation-police-campaign-egypt-amounts-abduction-well-known-journalist-blogger-wael-abbas/?lang=en>) police forces who raided Abbas’s home did not present (<http://anhri.net/escalation-police-campaign-egypt-amounts-abduction-well-known-journalist-blogger-wael-abbas/?lang=en>) a warrant or explain the reasons for his arrest. They seized personal belongings, including his laptop and several books. Abbas posted a message (https://twitter.com/summer_said/status/999151160018784257) on his Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/waelabbas>) at 5 a.m. saying, “I am being arrested.” The page is no longer available.

His lawyers were not able to locate or contact him at first, but later found him at the prosecutors’ headquarters, said Gamal Eid, the head of ANHRI and Abbas’s lawyer. Eid said that National Security Agency officers interrogated Abbas several times before presenting him to prosecutors, who ordered him detained for 15 days pending investigations and charged him with joining a “terrorist organization,” using social media to spread the organization’s ideas, and “spreading false news.”

Eid said that prosecutors indicted Abbas in case 441 of 2018, in which prosecutors claimed that detainees were part of the “media wing of the Muslim Brotherhood.” Prosecutors have indicted several journalists and activists in this case over the past weeks, including some who are critical of the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Adel Sabry (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-media-rights/egypt-police-raid-website-office-arrest-editor-in-chief-idUSKCN1HA2TX>), the chief editor of the independent news website Masr al-Arabiya.

The independent news website Mada Masr reported on May 28 (<https://www.madamasr.com/ar/2018/05/28/news/u/%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AF%D9%88%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A8%D8%B3-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8-%D8%AF%D9%83%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A9/>) that prosecutors ordered a doctorate student at the University of Washington, Seattle, Walid Khalil al-Shobaki, detained in the same case, interrogated him without a lawyer. Security held him incommunicado for almost four days. Security apparently arrested him shortly after he interviewed a law professor, Mohamed Nour Farahat, for his work on the independence of judiciary in Egypt.

Abbas, an award-winning blogger, founded “Egyptian Awareness (<http://misrdigital.blogspot.com/>),” writing about torture by the police and corruption, and posting videos and photos of protest crackdowns. Among his many awards are the 2008 Human Rights Watch Hellman Hammett award and the Knight International Journalism Award (<https://www.icfj.org/our-work/wael-abbas>) in 2007. He was named

“Middle East Person of the Year (http://edition.cnn.com/CNNI/Programs/middle.east/blog/2007/12/inside-middle-east-people-of-year-your.html)” by CNN in 2007. Abbas is also active on social media sites, especially Facebook.

On May 15, the Giza prosecution summoned al-Ghazaly Harb (https://www.madamasr.com/en/2018/05/15/news/u/activist-shady-al-ghazaly-harb-brought-before-supreme-state-security-prosecution/) for interrogation following a complaint from a lawyer based on his Twitter posts. These included controversial foreign affairs topics such as al-Sisi’s plan to cede two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia.

Prosecutors initially accused him of insulting the president and said he would be released on bail. But when his lawyer went to finalize his release, he found that al-Ghazaly Harb had been transferred to SSSP headquarters for interrogation in another case. The prosecutors ordered him detained for 15 days pending investigations and charged him

(http://www.masrawy.com/news/news_cases/details/2018/5/15/1347445/%D8%AD%D8%A8%D8%B3-%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-15-%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B0%D8%A8%D8%A9) with “spreading false news” and “joining an illegal group.”

A state security prosecutor ordered lawyer Mohamadeen, a workers’ rights defender, detained for 15 days (https://www.mc-doualiya.com/articles/20180521-%D9%87%D9%8A%D8%AB%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%AD%D8%A8%D8%B3-%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%B6%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%B3%D9%8A) on charges of “joining a terrorist organization” and “inciting protests,” in the same case (https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-politics/egypt-detains-prominent-blogger-latest-in-arrest-series-idUSKCN1IO1ZE) for which authorities interrogated al-Ghazaly Harb. National security forces initially detained (http://www.bbc.com/arabic/middleeast-44177039) Mohamadeen on May 18 and held him incommunicado for two days.

On May 11, security forces arrested Fathy (https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/11/middleeast/egypt-amal-fathy-activist-detained/index.html) from her home after she posted a video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2944TiQl42E) on her Facebook page criticizing the government and police for failing to protect women (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2944TiQl42E) from harassment in public places and also criticizing the efficiency of employees in a government-owned bank. The security forces also arrested her husband, Mohamed Lotfy, the head of the independent rights group the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms (ECFR). Police took their 3-year-old son to the police station with them and released him and Lotfy a few hours later but kept Fathy, claiming her case (https://www.thedailybeast.com/sexually-harassedand-arrestedin-egypt-the-cruel-fate-of-amal-fathy) needed prosecutors’ review. Prosecutors of al-Maadi district in Cairo kept her in detention

(<https://twitter.com/MadaMasr/status/999679897365725185>) on accusations of “intending to topple the ruling regime” and “misusing social media” and spreading rumors.

Police arrested Abu Zaid on May 6 after taking his two laptops, two phones, cash, a camera, and other personal belongings (<https://twitter.com/emadmutter/status/993061176643899392>) during a raid on his home, his sister said. His lawyer, Azza Soliman, said that his whereabouts are unknown (<http://www.nydailynews.com/newswires/entertainment/egypt-arrests-comedian-mocked-police-article-1.3975330>). Later SSSP ordered him detained on charges of “joining a terrorist organization” and “spreading false news.”

Abu Zaid was well-known for a prank video of himself handing out balloons made from condoms to police (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQkPD27HXP8>). He was previously a correspondent for the comedy show “Abla Fahitha.” On May 28, Soliman and ANHRI lawyers filed a complaint (<http://anhri.net/%D8%A8%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%BA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85-%D9%82%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%B7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84/>) accusing the police of stealing Abu Zaid’s possessions after the police told prosecutors that all they took from his home was some cash and did not return the confiscated items.

Prosecutors hold broad power in Egyptian law, in violation of international law, that allow them to hold those suspected of major offenses in pretrial detention for up to five months without bringing them before a judge, which judges can extend up to two years without proper hearings or substantive justification. Tens of thousands of prisoners remain in jail without trial in Egypt.

Egypt’s Constitution, in article 57, states that it is “impermissible” to deprive citizens of the right “to use all forms of public means of communications” or to interrupt or disconnect them arbitrarily. Article 71 states that “it is prohibited to censor, confiscate, suspend or shut down Egyptian newspapers and media outlets in any way.”

Some media outlets reported (http://www.masrawy.com/news/news_cases/details/2018/5/15/1347445/%D8%AD%D8%A8%D8%B3-%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%8A-%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-15-%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%87%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%A3%D8%AE%D8%A8%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B0%D8%A8%D8%A9) that the Supreme State Security Prosecutors listed both Fathy and Abu Zaid in the same case as al-Ghazaly Harb and Mohamadeen, claiming they were members of a “terrorist organization” aimed at spreading false news and toppling the government.

“Egyptian authorities should ditch the use of arrests against critics and release anyone who has been locked up or prosecuted for their peaceful human rights work or free expression,” Whitson said.

ecoi.net summary:

Article on wave of arrests of activists critical of the government; some of them held incommunicado



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HRW – Human Rights Watch [\(/en/source/11207.html\)](/en/source/11207.html)

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