

Freedom for Egyptian labour lawyer Haitham Mohamedain: speaking up for social justice is not a crime

Wednesday 23 May 2018, by [Egypt Solidarity Initiative](#) (Date first published: 22 May 2018).

Trade unionists, MPs, writers and academics have launched a protest statement calling for the immediate release of Egyptian labour lawyer Haitham Mohamedain who was seized by the security forces from his home on 18 May. Haitham appeared in court the following day and was remanded in custody for 15 days to face interrogation on charges of “inciting protests over the price of Metro tickets”. His detention follows a wave of arrests in the wake of demonstrations against the sharp rise in fares on Cairo’s underground railways.

Speaking out for social justice is not crime. Add your name to the petition demanding Haitham’s immediate release and an end to repression in Egypt.

Sign the petition online here:

<https://www.change.org/p/prosecutor-general-arab-republic-of-egypt-freedom-for-haitham-mohamedain-stop-the-repression-in-egypt>

Statement text: Freedom for Haitham Mohamedain - Stop the repression in Egypt

Early on Friday 18 May, Egyptian security forces stormed the house of labour lawyer and socialist activist Haitham Mohamedain, taking him away to an unknown destination. Haitham is a well-known defender of workers’ rights, and has worked tirelessly to support independent trade unionists facing state persecution for demanding better working conditions and the right to organise and strike. In addition, as Amnesty International notes, he “has been persecuted by the Egyptian authorities for his human rights work”, playing a crucial role in defending the El Nadeem Centre – which supports victims of torture and violence – from harassment and persecution by the authorities.

On Saturday 19 May, Haitham appeared in court and was remanded in custody for 15 days. According to reports from human rights activists in Egypt, he is being interrogated in relation to “incitement to protest over the price of Metro tickets.”

Some who allegedly protested over a recent abrupt rise in fares have been arrested and some subsequently released: others are still being held. It appears that Egypt’s security services have used the opportunity to seize Haitham Mohamedain: we believe that his arrest is designed, once again, to silence voices critical of the current military regime.

We are deeply concerned for Haitham's well-being, given the well-documented pattern of abuse and torture of detainees by Egyptian security forces. We are appalled that anyone should face detention and prosecution on charges of speaking out for basic human rights. We call on the Egyptian authorities to release him immediately and unconditionally and for any charges against him to be dropped.

Initial signatories include:

Noam Chomsky, Institute Professor Emeritus, MIT, USA

Elias Khoury, Novelist and Academic, Lebanon

Professor Clément Mouhot, University of Cambridge

Ian Hodson, National President, Bakers', Food & Allied Workers Union (UK)

Professor Gilbert Achcar, SOAS University of London, UK

Professor James Dickins, University of Leeds

Professor Alex Callinicos, King's College London

Professor Malcolm Povey, University of Leeds

Professor Khaled Fahmy, University of Cambridge

Dr Tim Pringle, SOAS University of London, UK

Dr Yasser Munif, Emerson College, Boston, USA

Prof. Nadjie Al-Ali, SOAS University of London, UK

Richard Boyd Barrett, People Before Profit TD, Dun Laoghaire, Ireland

Bríd Smith, People Before Profit TD, Dublin South Central

Gino Kenny, People Before Profit TD, Dublin Mid-West

Gerry Carroll, People Before Profit MLA, Belfast

Eamonn McCann, Journalist and author, Derry

Dr Peadar O'Grady, Consultant Child Psychiatrist, Dublin

Cllr Matt Collins, People Before Profit, Belfast City Council

Cllr Tina MacVeigh, People Before Profit, Dublin City Council

Cllr John Lyons, People Before Profit, Dublin City Council

Cllr Emma Hendrick, People Before Profit, South Dublin County Council.

Dr John Molyneux, retired lecturer and author

Dr Anne Alexander, University of Cambridge

Kieran Allen, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, UCD and author.

Dr Adam Hanieh, SOAS University of London, UK

Alan Wald, H. Chandler Davis Collegiate Professor Emeritus, University of Michigan, USA

Dr. Bashir Abu-Manneh, Reader in Postcolonial Literature, University of Kent

Professor Philip Marfleet, University of East London

Dr. Carlo Morelli, University of Dundee and UCU NEC member

Professor Ziad Elmarsafy, King's College London

Dr Nicola Pratt, University of Warwick

Professor Alfredo Saad Filho, SOAS University of London

Prof Mark Zeitoun, University of East Anglia

Prof John Chalcraft, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)

Lorenzo Feltrin, University of Warwick

Professor Ray Bush, University of Leeds

Khaled Eissa, King's College, London

Rima Majed, American University of Beirut

Dr. Waseem Yaqoob, University of Cambridge

Dr Rasha Soliman, University of Leeds

Suzan Gibril, Université libre de Bruxelles

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