

Egyptian woman Amal Fathy jailed for sexual harassment video

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Former activist charged with 'spreading false news' and having 'indecent material'

An Egyptian woman who made a video alleging sexual harassment has been given two years in prison and a fine on charges of "spreading false news".

Amal Fathy, an actor and a former activist, uploaded a video to her Facebook account in May detailing how she was sexually harassed during a visit to her bank and criticising the government's [failure to protect women](#).

Two days after the post, Egyptian security forces entered her home in a pre-dawn raid and arrested her along with her husband and young son, both of whom were later released.

Fathy was subsequently put on trial accused of spreading false news with intent to harm the Egyptian state and possessing "indecent material". She was sentenced to one year in prison for each charge, and given a fine of 10,000 Egyptian pounds (£430) for making "public insults".

In a second trial that is under way, she faces allegations that include being a member of a terrorist organisation.

In a UN survey in 2013, 99% of Egyptian women reported that they had experienced some [form of sexual harassment](#). Cairo was described as the "most dangerous megacity in the world for women" in a 2017 [Thomson Reuters Foundation poll](#).

Mohamed Lotfy, Fathy's husband and the head of the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms - who was barred from the courthouse during sentencing - said: "The sentencing is an appalling verdict that contains a message for every harasser, that he is free to harass without fearing punishment, and to every victim of harassment that if she speaks out, she will be jailed."

Amnesty International also [condemned the sentence](#).

"This is an outrageous case of injustice, where the survivor is sentenced while the abuser remains at large," said Najia Bounaim, its North [Africa](#) campaigns director.

"She is a human rights defender and sexual harassment survivor who told her truth to the world and highlighted the vital issue of women's safety in [Egypt](#). She is not a criminal and should not be punished for her bravery."

Other women who have attempted to publicly discuss their experiences of harassment in Egypt have faced similar treatment.

Mona el-Mazbouh, a Lebanese tourist who recorded a comparable video during her stay in Egypt,

was arrested at Cairo airport and [sentenced to eight years](#) in prison in July, accused of “spreading false rumours that would harm society, attacking religion and public indecency”.

Her sentence was later reduced to one year and then suspended, before she was [deported to Lebanon](#) in September.

Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, the Egyptian president, who came to power after a military coup in 2013, drew a large female following, partly due to his promises to ensure women’s safety on Egypt’s streets and combat harassment.

Maya Morsy, the president of the national council for women, has claimed [only 9.6% of women](#) in Egypt have been sexually harassed.

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The Guardian

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/29/egypt-amal-fathy-jailed-sexual-harassment-video>