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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Joint written statement submitted by International Support For Human Rights, Coordination des Associations et des Particuliers pour la Liberté de Conscience, non- governmental organizations in special consultative status*

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1 February 2026]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.



Arbitrary Detention, Enforced Disappearance, Torture, Prolonged Pre-Trial Detention, and Religious Coercion of Members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light in Egypt

We and Human Rights Without Frontiers are very concerned about the grave violation of freedom of religion or belief of members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light (AROPL) in Egypt. They are currently victims of ongoing arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance, torture and ill-treatment, prolonged pre-trial detention, denial of due process, and inhumane detention conditions.

Since early March 2025, Egyptian authorities have detained members of this religious minority solely for peacefully expressing their beliefs and possessing religious materials. As of January 2026, many remain imprisoned without trial, subjected to continued violations that contravene Egypt's obligations under international human rights law.

Arrests and Enforced Disappearances

On 8 March 2025, Egypt's National Security Agency (NSA) launched a coordinated campaign of arrests in Cairo, Giza, and 10th of Ramadan City. These arrests followed a peaceful incident in which an adherent of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light displayed a small banner promoting the movement's television channel, The Mahdi Has Appeared (Zahra al-Mahdi).

Security forces traced the banner to a private Telegram group used by Egyptian believers and subsequently detained individuals associated with the group. Additional arrests occurred in the following days, including in Luxor and other governorates. Several detainees were arrested at their homes without judicial warrants.

The individuals detained during this campaign include:

- Fadi Mohammed Hassan Mohammed Al-Nahhas
- Mahmoud Ibrahim Mahmoud Al-Sharnouby
- Hussein Mohammed Hassan Al-Tinawi
- Ahmed Mohammed Hassan Al-Tinawi (deported)
- Omar Mahmoud Abdelmaguid Mohamed, husband of Sameera
- Mahmoud Abdelmagid Abdelmagid Moaz
- Al-Sayed Othman Mohamad Ghali
- Hamdy Abd El-Azeem El-Sayed Abdallah
- Othman Al-Gohary Othman Othman
- Ali Al-Hadari
- Ali Ahmad Mahmoud Shahat
- Mohammed Eissa Rashad Abdelraheem
- Hazem Saied Mohamed Abd El-Moatamed
- Mohammed Adel Mohammed Salah Al-Deeb
- Mohammed Ahmed Ali Abdel-Hameed

On 11 March 2025, two Syrian nationals registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Ahmed Mohammed Hassan Al-Tinawi and Hussein Mohammed Hassan Al-Tinawi, were arrested. Ahmed Al-Tinawi was held incommunicado for 28 days before being forcibly deported to the Syrian Arab Republic on 9 April 2025, despite his status as a registered asylum seeker.

For more than a month, the remaining detainees were subjected to enforced disappearance. They were held without charge, denied access to lawyers, and prevented from contacting their families. Families who filed complaints with prosecutorial authorities received no information regarding their relatives' whereabouts.

Torture and Ill-Treatment in Custody

When the detainees were eventually brought before the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) in April 2025, several reported that they had been subjected to torture and severe ill-treatment during their period of enforced disappearance under the authority of the National Security Agency.

Documented allegations include electric shocks, including to the genitals; severe beatings; prolonged physical and psychological abuse; and denial of medical care for injuries sustained during interrogation. These allegations were not investigated by the authorities.

Instead, the detainees were charged with "joining a group established in violation of the law and constitution," a vague and broadly worded accusation frequently used to criminalize peaceful religious belief and association.

Denial of Legal Access and Due Process

Lawyers from the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR) reported that they were deliberately barred from attending the initial interrogation sessions before the Supreme State Security Prosecution. This obstruction prevented independent documentation of torture and other abuses.

To date, EIPR lawyers have been denied access to the official case file. The detainees were denied the right to legal counsel of their choosing and compelled to rely on state-appointed lawyers they did not select.

Although EIPR lawyers are now permitted to attend detention renewal hearings, these proceedings are conducted remotely, preventing confidential communication between detainees and their legal representatives and rendering legal assistance ineffective.

Prolonged Pre-Trial Detention

Since their arrest in early March 2025, the detainees have now been held in prolonged pre-trial detention for over ten months, without being brought to trial or presented with individualized evidence justifying their continued deprivation of liberty.

Their detention has been repeatedly renewed by the Supreme State Security Prosecution in a routine and automatic manner, without meaningful judicial scrutiny, effective legal representation, or consideration of alternatives to detention. This practice demonstrates that pre-trial detention is being used as a punitive measure rather than an exceptional legal safeguard, in violation of due-process guarantees and the right to be tried without undue delay.

Inhumane Detention Conditions

The detainees remain held in 10th of Ramadan Prison, where conditions are harsh and degrading. Reports indicate inadequate food, lack of warm clothing, exposure to cold temperatures causing illness, and severe restrictions on family visits.

Access to medical care has been critically inadequate. One detainee, a 64-year-old man suffering from diabetes and kidney disease, has experienced a grave deterioration in health, including near blindness, swollen limbs, and episodes of diabetic coma. Despite repeated urgent appeals, prison authorities have failed to provide adequate medical treatment or hospital transfer.

Religious Coercion and Al-Azhar Interventions

Between December 2025 and January 2026, detainees reported a new and deeply concerning form of abuse: repeated visits by Al-Azhar-affiliated sheikhs inside the prison.

During this period, detainees were subjected to up to eight visits within fewer than twenty days. These visits were conducted with the knowledge and facilitation of prison authorities and were explicitly aimed at pressuring detainees to abandon their faith.

Detainees reported being told that their continued detention was the result of their religious beliefs and that renouncing their faith could lead to improved conditions or release. The cumulative effect of these repeated interventions amounted to psychological pressure and coercion, using deprivation of liberty as leverage to force religious renunciation.

Such conduct constitutes a serious violation of the right to freedom of religion or belief, including the freedom not to be compelled to change one's religion.

Broader Pattern of Persecution

The targeting of members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light reflects a broader pattern of repression against religious minorities in Egypt. Peaceful expression of beliefs outside state-sanctioned religious frameworks continues to be met with surveillance, arrest, detention, and abuse.

The use of national security charges, enforced disappearance, torture, prolonged pre-trial detention, and coercive religious intervention illustrates a systematic effort to suppress religious pluralism.

Call to Action

We join Amnesty International, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, and other human rights organizations in urging the Government of Egypt to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release all individuals detained solely for their religious beliefs or peaceful expression;
2. Investigate enforced disappearances, torture, and ill-treatment committed by security forces;
3. End the misuse of prolonged pre-trial detention and uphold fair-trial guarantees;
4. Ensure full access to legal counsel of choice and transparent judicial proceedings;
5. Provide immediate and adequate medical care to all detainees;
6. Cease all forms of religious coercion and respect freedom of religion or belief.

Conclusion

Nearly a year after their arrest, members of the Ahmadi Religion of Peace and Light remain imprisoned without trial, subjected to torture, denial of due process, inhumane detention conditions, and coercive attempts to force religious renunciation.

We urge the United Nations Human Rights Council to address this situation as a matter of urgency and to take all appropriate measures to protect the detainees and uphold the right to freedom of religion or belief in Egypt.

Human Rights Without Frontiers, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.