

BY PRIORITY AIRMAIL

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
H.E. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi
Office of the President
Al Ittihadia Palace
CAIRO, EGYPT

By e-mail : p.spokesman@op.gov.eg

Amsterdam, 1 March 2021

Subject: Disappearance attorney at law Islam Salama

Your Excellency,

Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent and non-political foundation that seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession.

We are deeply concerned by the enforced disappearance of attorney at law Islam Salama. According to the information we received, Mr. Salama forcibly disappeared for a third consecutive time while in custody, following earlier verdicts by criminal courts in Cairo and Mahalla ordering his release.

On 16 January 2021 the Mahalla Criminal Court ordered Mr. Salama's release on bail. Despite the bail having been posted and all other (legal) procedures being completed, Mr. Salama disappeared after having been in custody of the Egyptian authorities. To date, Mr. Salama's family and his legal counsel do not know where Mr. Salama is held and cannot contact him.

Last year, Mr. Salama's forcibly disappeared on two occasions. It is reported that on 25 May 2020, Egyptian security forces arrested Mr. Salama in his home in Zefta. It is reported that the security forces refused to present a warrant and they refused to provide an answer as to why he was being detained. Hereafter, Mr. Salama was detained in an undisclosed location for ten days before he was brought before the Supreme State Security Prosecution on 6 June 2020. The prosecution ordered his imprisonment over charges of Mr. Salama "joining a terrorist group". On 14 October 2020 Mr. Salama was ordered to be released on parole by Cairo's Fifth Circuit Terrorism Court. Yet after Salama's transfer to the local police station on 19 October 2020 to complete the parole proceedings, neither his family nor his lawyers were able to contact him. His whereabouts remained unknown for 45 days until he was produced before court on 30 November 2020 on the basis of new charges, which led to his remand in custody.

We respectfully draw your attention to the United Nations (UN) Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (Basic Principles)¹, more in particular Principle 16 which reads:

16. Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference (...) and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

These principles are universally applicable. Your government is therefore obligated to adequately protect and support its lawyers.

In view of the above, Lawyers for Lawyers respectfully urge you to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Islam Salama and put an end to all acts of harassment against him, including at the judicial level;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Islam Salama; and
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all lawyers in Egypt are able to carry out their legitimate professional rights and duties without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Thank you for your continued attention to this very important matter. We are confident that the government of Egypt will abide by its legal obligations.

Yours sincerely,

LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS (L4L)

¹ The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers provide a concise description of international norms relating to the key aspects of the right to independent counsel. The Basic Principles were unanimously adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Havana, Cuba on September 7 1990. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly “welcomed” the Basic Principles in their ‘Human rights in the administration of justice’ resolution, in a resolution that was adopted without a vote on December 18 1990 in both the session of the Third Committee and the plenary session of the General Assembly.