

BY AIRMAIL/EMAIL

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

Amsterdam, 21 February 2022

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

Subject: arrest and detention of human rights lawyer Osama Bayoumi

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. Lawyers for Lawyers has Special Consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council since 2013.

We wish to express our serious concern over the arbitrary arrest, subsequent disappearance and ongoing detention of human rights lawyer Osama Bayoumi. Mr. Bayoumi is a member of the Lawyers Syndicate and working on prominent human rights cases.

According to the information we received, Mr. Bayoumi was arrested on 29 January 2022 at his home in Cairo by a group of security officers who reportedly failed to present an arrest warrant or a warrant to search his home. The work laptop and mobile phone of Mr. Bayoumi, which contain confidential information about his clients, were confiscated by the authorities. We have been informed that at the time of his arrest, Mr. Bayoumi was working on a number of sensitive cases involving political prisoners and journalists.

After his arrest, Mr. Bayoumi was disappeared in an undisclosed location for five days and was not presented before any investigative body until 3 February 2022, where he appeared before the Supreme State Security Persecution (SSSP) in Cairo. The SSSP ordered the remand of Mr. Bayoumi for a period of fifteen days in Tora Maximum Security Prison. According to our information, Mr. Bayoumi was detained in relation to case no. 640/2018 and charged with 'joining a terrorist group' and 'spreading false news'.

Lawyers for Lawyers fears that the arrest and detention of Mr. Bayoumi is aimed to curb his legitimate activities as an attorney.

In view of the above, we draw your attention to the United Nations (UN) Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers¹, particularly Principle 16, which states:

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.

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

1. Release Osama Bayoumi and drop all charges against him unless credible evidence is presented in proceedings that respect fair trial guarantees, and put an end to all acts of harassment against Osama Bayoumi, including at the judicial level;
2. 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.

We thank you for your attention and consideration to this very important matter. We hope that the government of Egypt will give this case the attention it deserves. We will continue to monitor this case closely.

Yours sincerely,
Lawyers for Lawyers

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 7 September 1990. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly “welcomed” the Basic Principles in their ‘Human rights in the administration of justice’ resolution, which was adopted without a vote on 18 December 1990 in both the session of the Third Committee and the plenary session of the General Assembly.