

URGENT ACTION

FORMER PRISONERS AND RIGHTS DEFENDERS UNDER TRAVEL BAN

For up to six years, the Egyptian authorities have imposed arbitrary travel bans on researcher, **Ahmed Samir Santawy**, human rights lawyer, **Mohamed El-Baqer**, and senior staff at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), **Karim Ennarah** and **Mohamed Basheer**, and former EIPR Executive Director, **Gasser Abdel Razek**. The authorities weaponize travel bans to punish and silence formerly imprisoned human rights defenders and activists solely for exercising their human rights. In addition to violating the right to freedom of movement, these arbitrary restrictions have violated the right to education, work and family life by preventing those under travel ban from studying, taking up employment opportunities, and reuniting with family members abroad. They also have a chilling impact on human rights work and the right to freedom of association by barring human defenders from traveling abroad including for advocacy, networking, or training.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **UA 67.26**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Public Prosecutor Mohamed Shawky Ayyad

Email: m.office@ppo.gov.eg;

X: @EgyptianPPO

Send a copy of your letter to the address below

CC: Egyptian Embassy in the United States

Ambassador Motaz Zahran

3521 International Court, NW,

Washington DC 20008

Email: embassy@egyptembassy.net

ambassador@egyptembassy.net

Dear Counselor,

I am writing to express my grave concern over the Egyptian authorities' ongoing use of arbitrary travel bans to punish dissent and silence independent voices. Among those subjected to such arbitrary travel bans for periods ranging from three years to six years are senior staff members, **Karim Ennarah** and **Mohamed Basheer**, as well as former EIPR Executive Director, **Gasser Abdel Razek**, human rights lawyer, **Mohamed El-Baqer**, and researcher, **Ahmed Samir Santawy**. The authorities had previously subjected all five to arbitrary detention and continue to target them because of their human rights work and peaceful exercise of their human rights. In most cases, the travel bans are communicated verbally to those affected, leaving them unable to effectively challenge them.

I urge you to immediately revoke arbitrary travel bans imposed on Ahmed Samir Santawy, Mohamed El-Baqer, Karim Ennarah, Mohamed Basheer, and Gasser Abdel Razek, and drop outstanding charges and investigations against them. I also call for an end to the use of travel bans against human rights defenders, former prisoners, and others targeted solely for exercising their human rights, and to ensure that any restrictions on freedom of movement fully comply with Egypt's obligations under international human rights law.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights lawyer **Mohamed El-Baqer**, founder and director of the Adalah Center for Rights and Freedoms was [arrested](#) on September 29, 2019, at the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) while representing prominent activist **Alaa Abdel Fattah**. He was interrogated in August 2020 on charges of "joining a terrorist organization" under Case No. 855/2020, and on December 20, 2021, the Emergency State Security Court convicted him and sentenced him to four years' imprisonment on spurious charges of "spreading false news". His name was subsequently added to the Egyptian authorities' "terrorist" list, imposing a five-year travel ban and bar on civic engagement. After nearly four years of arbitrary detention, Baqer received a presidential pardon on July 19, 2023, and was released. However, the authorities maintained his designation on the list. As a result of this designation, Mohamed El-Baqer was subjected to a travel ban, his assets were frozen, and he was prohibited from engaging in political or civic work for five years. In November 2025, the designation was renewed for a further five years, without justification and without any opportunity for him to challenge the decision. On June 13, 2026, authorities rejected Mohamed El-Baqer's appeal to be removed from Egypt's terrorist list without providing a reasoned decision.

Ahmed Samir Santawy is a researcher and anthropology student at the Central European University in Vienna, Austria. His research addresses women's rights, with a focus on reproductive rights. Authorities [arrested](#) him on February 1, 2021, and subsequently convicted for spreading "false news" and sentenced to four years' imprisonment following an unfair trial. His conviction was based solely on social media posts criticizing human rights violations in Egypt and the state's mishandling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Following a global campaign, he was released on July 30, 2022, after receiving a presidential pardon. Despite that pardon, travel restrictions were immediately enforced. Cairo International Airport officials arbitrarily banned Ahmed Samir Santawy from traveling to Austria to resume his studies on August 27, 2022, and again in June 2023. In April 2026, Egypt's Higher Administrative Court lifted his travel ban, however, a new ban was issued by the prosecution against him the same month.

Former EIPR Executive Director, **Gasser Abdel Razek**, Research Director, **Karim Ennarah**, and Administrative Director, **Mohamed Bashir**, were [arrested](#) between November 15 and 19, 2020. Following significant domestic and international pressure, the authorities released all three on December 3, 2020, but did not close the investigation against them. All three men had travel bans imposed on them. EIPR lawyers have repeatedly sought to [challenge](#) the travel bans and asset freezes before the Cairo Court of Appeals, but the court refused to hear the case.

The continued use of arbitrary travel bans violates Egypt's obligations under international human rights law, including Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which guarantees the right of everyone to leave any country, including their own. Any restriction on this right must be lawful, necessary, proportionate, and subject to effective judicial oversight.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: December 29, 2026

NAME AND PRONOUN: Ahmed Samir Santawy, Mohamed El-Baqer, Karim Ennarah, Mohamed Basheer, and Gasser Abdel Razek (He/Him)