

URGENT ACTION

SIX UNJUSTLY DETAINED JOURNALISTS TORTURED

On September 28 and 29, 2026, Egyptian security forces arrested six journalists working for the independent fact-checking platform Matsadaash, namely: Mohamed Ashraf Abu Emeira, Abdallah Qadry, Islam Barakat, Omar Helal, Mohamed Mahmoud, and Mohamed Adel. Following their arrests, they were forcibly disappeared for periods ranging between five and six days. Amnesty International learned that during this period security officers subjected all six to torture and other ill-treatment to force them to record self-incriminating statements on video. Mohamed Ashraf Abu Emeira was held in 10th of Ramadan prison, while the other five journalists were detained in Badr prison, pending investigations into terrorism-related and “false news” charges in connection with their media work. The authorities must immediately and unconditionally release them as they are solely detained for their media work and the exercise of their right to freedom of expression.

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 107.26**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Public Prosecutor Mohamed Shawky Ayyad

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

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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 concerned about the arbitrary detention and reported torture of six journalists working for Matsadaash: **Mohamed Ashraf Abu Emeira, Abdallah Qadry, Islam Barakat, Omar Helal, Mohamed Mahmoud**, and **Mohamed Adel**. Following their arrests on September 28 and 29, 2026, the journalists were held for five to six days in undisclosed locations, while authorities concealed their whereabouts from their families and lawyers. On October 4, 2026, they were brought to the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) for interrogations. According to a member of the defense team, during questioning by the SSSP, the six journalists said that National Security Agency (NSA) agents subjected them to torture and other ill-treatment during their detention at NSA premises. Officers forced them to read out prepared statements incriminating themselves while being filmed.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release all six journalists and drop all charges against them as they stem solely from the exercise of their right to freedom of expression and media work. Pending their release, ensure their protection from torture and other ill-treatment, including reprisals against them or their families for reporting abuse; grant them regular access to their families, access to their lawyers confidentially and any healthcare they need; and ensure that their detention conditions meet international standards for the treatment of prisoners. Finally, ensure an effective investigation into their allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and enforced disappearance.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Matsadaash is an independent Egyptian platform that carries out fact-checking and investigative reporting. Its work includes scrutinizing official statements and reporting on matters of public interest. For instance, the platform factchecked official claims about [refugee and migrant numbers in Egypt](#) and government [statements](#) on health and education spending. The six journalists arrested in September 2026 constituted the platform's entire editorial team working inside Egypt.

Security forces arrested the journalists in a series of raids between September 28 through September 29, 2026. **Mohamed Ashraf Abu Emeira** and **Abdallah Qadry** were arrested at their homes in Giza governorate, while **Islam Barakat** and **Omar Helal** were arrested from their homes in Gharbiya and Port Said governorates, respectively. **Mohamed Mahmoud** and **Mohamed Adel** were arrested on the streets of Cairo. During the home raids, security officers confiscated phones and computers, including devices belonging to relatives, without showing arrest warrants or informing families where they were taking the journalists. According to a member of the defense team, lawyers asked the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) to register the journalists' accounts of torture and coerced recorded statements as formal complaints and investigate the circumstances of their arrests and enforced disappearance. They also requested that prosecutors refer the journalists to the Forensic Medicine Authority to document their injuries and bring those responsible for torture to trial. Prosecutors did not respond, while on October 7, 2026, the Public Prosecution issued a statement alleging that Matsadaash operated as a media committee affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. It also stated that no visible injuries were found on the six journalists and that forensic examinations carried out on three of the individuals found no injuries or signs of violence. In [response](#), the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), whose lawyers represent the journalists, said the prosecution had presented lawful employment arrangements and routine editorial communications as evidence for crimes.

Five of the journalists were held in Badr 1 prison, while Mohamed Ashraf Abu Emeira was detained in 10th of Ramadan 4 prison. Amnesty International has documented cruel and inhuman detention conditions in Egyptian prisons. In June 2024, dozens of Badr 1 prisoners began a hunger strike to protest detention conditions.

Since 2016, the Egyptian authorities have further tightened their control over the media and subjected dozens of journalists and other media workers to arbitrary arrest and detention, prosecution on unfounded terrorism-related charges, and dismissal for expressing critical views. Media and cybercrime legislation adopted in 2018 further expanded the authorities' powers to control media content, restrict media work, and impose prison sentences for online expression. The arrests of the six Matsadaash journalists sparked solidarity protests, including a sit-in at the Egyptian Journalists' Syndicate on October 3, 2026 demanding their release. Two days later, on October 5, 2026, journalist **Rasha Azab**, who took part in the sit-in, was interrogated over a social media post criticizing the interior ministry, accused of promoting terrorist acts, and released on bail of EGP 10,000.

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

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: April 16, 2027

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mohamed Ashraf Abu Emeira, Abdallah Qadry, Islam Barakat, Omar Helal, Mohamed Mahmoud, and Mohamed Adel