

Le Vice-Bâtonnier

Mister Abdul FATTAH AL-SISSI
President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
7 Gomhoria St, Abdin Square
Post box: 22 Cairo central
EGYPT

E-mail: cairoaov@cairo.gov.eg
Fax: +20 2 23 90 19 98

Geneva, 15th January 2020

Re : Grave concerns about the situation of Mr Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy

Dear Mister President of the Arab Republic of Egypt,
Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Geneva Bar Association (ODAGE), which represents more than 1,500 lawyers in Geneva. The ODAGE is member of the Swiss Federation of Lawyers, the Union Internationale des Avocats, the International Bar Association and the International Observatory of Endangered Lawyers.

The ODAGE places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law and is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

We are writing to you, considering the influence that you may have on the judiciary, to express our concern about the situation of human rights lawyers in Egypt.

We understand that **Mr Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy**, a human rights lawyer and active human rights defender working on the issue of enforced disappearances, has been under preventive detention since his arrest on 10 September 2017 at Cairo International airport while he was on its way to attend a meeting with the United Nations Working Group on Enforced Disappearances at the 26th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

In particular, we have been informed that since his arrest, numerous renewals of his preventive detention have been ordered, pending an investigation into a list of allegations, including "membership of an illegal organisation" and "financing a terrorist group", despite the fact that his preventive detention appears to have exceeded the legal period of preventive detention under the

Egyptian law. Furthermore, we have been informed that he has been denied appropriate health care and that his rights of defense have been infringed.

The ODAGE is profoundly concerned about **Mr Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy** and other Human Rights Lawyers who face continuous harassment and reprisal simply for the exercise as citizens' rights defenders.

The ODAGE recalls the valuable role of lawyers and human rights defenders in the promotion and defense of the rule of law and in society at large.

We draw your attention to the **1990 UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers**. This states that Egyptian authorities have an obligation to ensure that lawyers can perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference and that they do not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution for any action taken while carrying out their duties (Principle 16).

Furthermore, according to Principle 23, *"Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization."*

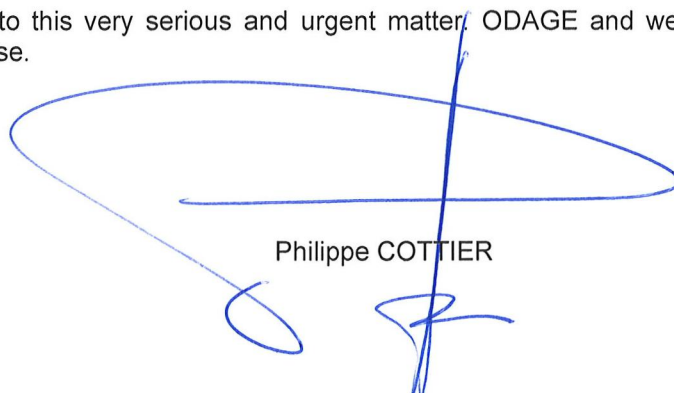
We remind you that the UN Basic Principles were adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990, have a normative value under customary international law, and should be respected by Egypt, which was present at the Congress and voted in favour of their adoption.

Therefore, and in light of the above, I respectfully urge the Egyptian authorities to:

- **Immediately and unconditionally release Mr Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy;**
- **Immediately end any proceedings initiated against any lawyers and human rights defenders for carrying their profession and exercising legitimate human rights activities;**
- **protect Mr Ibrahim Metwally Hegazy and all lawyers and human rights defenders in Egypt against any present or future harassment, intimidation and/or reprisal in the exercise of their legitimate human rights activities.**

We thank you for your attention to this very serious and urgent matter. ODAGE and we will continue to closely monitor this case.

Respectfully yours,



Philippe COTTIER

Copy to:

- **Mr Moustafa Madbouly**
Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Magles El Shaab, Street, Kasr El Aini Street
11582 Cairo
Egypt
Email: pm@cabinet.gov.eg
- **Mr Omar Marwan**
Minister of Justice of the Arab Republic of Egypt
Magles El Shaab St., Lazoughly Sq., Lazoughly
Cairo
Egypt
Email: mjustice@moj.gov.eg
- **Egyptian Bar Association**
49a Ramses Street
Cairo
Egypt
- **Swiss Embassy in Egypt**
Embassy of Switzerland
10, Abdel Khalek Sarwat Street
11511 Cairo
Egypt
Email: cairo@eda.admin.ch
- **Egyptian Embassy in Switzerland**
Elfenauweg 61
3006 Berne
Switzerland
Email: embassy.bern@mfa.gov.eg
- **Special Rapporteur on the independence of Judges and Lawyers**
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva
8-14 Avenue de la Paix 1211
Geneva 10
Switzerland
Email : SRindependenceJL@ohchr.org