

Egypt: A Presidential Pardon Frees some WHRDs, while Others are Still Detained or Not Included

On 23 September 2015, a Presidential Decree was issued, No. 386 for the year 2015, for the complete pardon of 100 detainees for the remainder of their imprisonment verdict and subsequent monitoring, including women human rights defenders (WHRDs) in the case known as the Ittihadia Presidential Palace Case, and the subsequent monitoring of 2 years, namely: Ms. Yara Sallam, Ms. Sanaa Seif, Ms. Samar Ibrahim, Ms. Hanan Mohamed, Ms. Fekreya Mohamed (known as Rania ElSheikh), Ms. Salwa Mhriz and Ms. Nahed Sherif (known as Nahed Bibo). While Yara, Sanaa, Hanan, Samar and Fekreya have been released, Salwa and Nahed are still detained in Qanater Women's Prison, despite the concerned presidential pardon. Moreover, the list of those pardoned did not include WHRD and Lawyer Mahienour El-Massry, who is currently detained in Al-Aba'adeya Women's Prison in Beheira governorate, in the case known as ElRaml Police Station Case, while other activists detained on the same case, were among those pardoned.

While the release of the concerned WHRDs is welcomed, it is only natural, and may have been conducted quite late, since their imprisonment came as a result of the application of the Protest and Public Assembly Law No. 107 for the year 2013, that is unconstitutional and does not adhere to international standards, and any day spent in prison is far too long. Furthermore, the delay in the release of both Ms. Salwa Mhriz and Ms. Nahed Sherif is quite atrocious, especially that Ms. Mhriz's release is halted by the fact that her name is not written correctly in the pardon decision. As for Ms. Mahienour El-Massry, it is feared that her exclusion from the concerned pardon is a result of her being targeted for her well-known and prominent human rights activism.

Subsequently, the undersigned organizations urge the Egyptian authorities to promptly release both Ms. Salwa Mhriz and Ms. Nahed Sherif today, so they can celebrate El-Adha holidays with their families and loved ones, in addition to issuing a supplement to the presidential pardon to include Ms. Mahienour El-Massry so she can join the referred to WHRDs in their righteous freedom, especially that they should not have been imprisoned in the first place, and for the Egyptian authorities to adhere to international declarations and treaties that ensure the protection of women human rights defenders, respect for their work and acknowledgement of the important human rights activism they conduct.

The Signed Organizations:

1. Nazra for Feminist Studies
2. African Women Development Fund (AWDF)
3. Agrupación Ciudadana por la Despenalización del Aborto Terapéutico, Ético y Eugenésico, El Salvador
4. Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
5. Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
6. Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)
7. Colectiva Feminista para el Desarrollo Local, El Salvador
8. Consorcio para el Diálogo Parlamentario y la Equidad Oaxaca
9. FOKUS- Forum for Women and Development
10. Global Fund for Women (GFW)
11. International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
12. Jass – Asociadas por lo Justo (Mesoamerica)
13. MADRE: Demanding Rights, Resources & Results for Women Worldwide
14. Red Nacional de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos, Honduras
15. The Global Network of Women Peacebuilders
16. The International Network Of Women's Fund (INWF)
17. Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights
18. WO=MEN Dutch Gender Platform
19. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
20. World Organization against Torture (OMCT)