

Alaa Abd el-Fattah must be released this month at the end of his prison sentence

The Egyptian-British writer and activist, Alaa Abd el-Fattah, must be released on Sunday 29 September at the end of his five year prison sentence, in accordance with Egyptian law, a coalition of 59 Egyptian and international civil society organisations stated today.

The organisations expressed their deep alarm at news, shared by his lawyer, that the Egyptian authorities do not plan to release Alaa until January 2027.

Not releasing Alaa on 29 September would represent a violation of Article 482 of the Egyptian Code of Criminal Procedure, which stipulates that the period of a custodial sentence begins “from the day of the arrest of the convict... taking into account its reduction by the amount of pretrial detention periods and the period of arrest.”

Egyptian law requires that time served in pretrial detention is deducted from prison sentences. Alaa’s sister, Sanaa Seif, was [released](#) at the end of an 18 month prison sentence in 2021, after the authorities deducted the time she had served waiting for her trial.

Alaa Abd el-Fattah has been imprisoned almost continuously since 2014. His most recent period of detention began on 28 September 2019, while he was briefly on probationary release from a previous conviction. He was ordered into pretrial detention pending investigations into bogus terrorism-related charges. In December 2021, after a trial that UN experts judged to be [unfair](#), a court handed him a five year prison sentence for "spreading false news", simply for sharing a Facebook post about torture. In 2022, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [called](#) for his immediate release. UN human rights experts have also called for the [release](#) of blogger Mohamed “Oxygen” Ibrahim Radwan, sentenced alongside Alaa to four years in prison. “Oxygen” has been held in solitary confinement since 2023.

Khaled Ali, Alaa’s lawyer, has stated that the Egyptian authorities are attempting to justify their refusal to release Alaa until 2027 by citing the original spurious terrorism investigation that predated his trial. In reality, however, the case in which Alaa was ultimately sentenced was ultimately derived from this investigation; the Egyptian authorities copied a number of the same exact charges from the original terrorism case and crafted the second case in which Alaa was sentenced. Creating a false distinction between the two cases, authorities are now alleging that time spent in pretrial detention applies under the first case, but not the second.

Regardless of this legal fallacy, Egyptian authorities’ analysis of the situation is improper. Failing to release Alaa would also be in violation of Article 484 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, which stipulates that pretrial detention be deducted in the event of multiple cases.

The civil society organisations are calling on Egypt’s international partners to urgently raise Alaa’s case with their counterparts, and to call for his immediate release, in line with Egyptian legal requirements.

Full list of signatory organisations

Access Now
African Middle Eastern Leadership Project (AMEL)
ALQST for Human Rights
ANKH Association (Arab Network for Knowledge about Human Rights)
ARTICLE19
Artists at Risk Connection (ARC)
Association for Farmers Rights Defense (AFRD)
Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy (BIRD)
Bahrain Press Association
BlueLink Foundation
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)
Council for Arab-British Understanding (Caabu)
Derechos Digitales
Eco forum Zenica
Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms
Egyptian Front for Human Rights (EFHR)
Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
EgyptWide for Human Rights
Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF)
El Nadeem Center against Violence and Torture
EuroMed Rights
FairSquare
Freedom Now
Grassroots Global Justice Alliance
GreenNet
Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)
Human Rights First
HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement
INSM
Institute for Policy Studies Climate Policy Program
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
International Press Institute (IPI)
International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms
JCA-NET(Japan)
Jokkolabs Banjul
MAUSAM Movement for Advancing Understanding of Sustainability And Mutuality
Meedan
Middle East Democracy Center

New Hope for Poor
Pangea.org
People in Need
Red Line for Gulf (RL4G)
REDRESS
Refugees Platform In Egypt
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
Sinai Foundation for Human Rights
SMEX
Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR)
The Climate Justice Coalition
The Global Campaign to Demand Climate Justice
The Open Society Foundations (OSF)
The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)
War on Want
World Movement for Democracy
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the
Protection of Human Rights Defenders