

# WORLDWIDE APPEALS — May 2021

An appeal from you to the authorities can help the victims of human rights violations. You can help free a prisoner of conscience or stop torture. Your message can bring liberty to a victim of disappearance. You may prevent an execution. The victims are many, the violators wide ranging. Every appeal counts.



## Prisoner of conscience detained incommunicado

Following his arrest on 1 February, researcher and master's student Ahmed Samir Santawy was subjected to enforced disappearance for five days. During this time, security forces beat him and kept him blindfolded, while interrogating him about his social media engagement and academic research. On 6 February, the Supreme State Security Prosecution ordered his detention pending investigations into terrorism-related charges. He has been denied contact with his family, raising concerns about his wellbeing and health amid COVID-19 outbreaks in Egypt's overcrowded and unhygienic prisons. He must be immediately and unconditionally released.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

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Dear Counsellor,

*I am writing to express concern about the arbitrary detention of 29-year-old researcher and anthropology master's student **Ahmed Samir Santawy**, pending investigations by the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP), a special branch of the Public Prosecution responsible for investigating national security threats.*

*Ahmed Samir Santawy was arrested on 1 February after he had presented himself at the office of the National Security Agency (NSA), a specialized police force, in New Cairo, in response to a verbal summon. He was subjected to enforced disappearance until 6 February, when he was brought to the SSSP for questioning. He told the prosecutor that during this period he was held without access to his family or lawyer in three separate locations. He said he was blindfolded and punched in the head and stomach during questioning at the NSA office in the Fifth Settlement Police Station. NSA interrogators focused on his studies and involvement in an anti-government Facebook page. The prosecutor failed to order investigations into his allegations of being forcibly disappeared and beaten, and instead questioned him about this academic work and ordered his detention for 15 days pending investigations into charges of "membership in a terrorist group", "spreading false news" and "using a social media account to spread false news" in Case No.65/2021. The SSSP based its accusations on a Facebook post deemed critical of the authorities that Ahmed Samir Santawy denied authoring, as well as an investigation file prepared by the NSA, which Ahmed Samir Santawy and his lawyers were not allowed to review. Amnesty International considers Ahmed Samir Santawy to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely because of his academic interests and research focusing on gender and religion.*

*Ahmed Samir Santawy is currently held at Liman Tora Prison in the south of Cairo, without access to his family or lawyers. His detention without contact with the outside world raises concerns about his health and wellbeing, particularly given COVID-19 outbreaks in prisons, coupled with the lack of adequate medical care. He also has a history of mental health concerns, which may be exacerbated in prison particularly in the absence of adequate mental health care.*

*I therefore ask you to immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Samir Santawy and open a prompt, independent, impartial, and effective investigation into his allegations of being forcibly disappeared and beaten. Pending his release, he must be granted immediate and regular access to his family and lawyers, provided with adequate health care and protected from torture and ill-treatment.*

**Amnesty International–Nobel Peace Prize 1977 UN Human Rights Prize 1978**

For more information about the Salisbury branch  
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