

Public Prosecutor
Hamada al-Sawi
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt

Dear Counsellor,

On 22 September 2019 at around 7 pm, men in plain clothes arrested human rights lawyer Mahienour el-Masry at the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) building in Alexandria and bundled her into a minivan to an undisclosed location. She was at the SSSP to follow up on the investigations of those who have been arrested over

protests that broke out on 20 and 21 September 2019, calling on President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi to resign. On 23 September 2019, an SSSP prosecutor questioned Mahienour el-Masry, and decided to hold her for 15 days in Al Qanater women's prison pending investigation on case 488 of 2019 which relates to the March 2019 anti-government protests. She faces charges of "collaborating with a terrorist organization to achieve its goals", "spreading false news", and "using social media to publish false rumours."

Mahienour el-Masry's detention comes amidst the biggest crackdown under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's rule. More than 2,300 people were arrested in connection with the 20-21 September 2019 protests calling on President al-Sisi to resign.

Amnesty International considers that Mahienour el-Masry is a human rights defender and prisoner of conscience who is detained solely for her peaceful work defending victims of human rights violations.

I therefore ask you to immediately and unconditionally release Mahienour el-Masry. I call on you to also ensure that - pending her release - she is granted access to her lawyers and family and that she is protected from torture and other ill-treatment. I finally urge the Egyptian authorities to immediately release all those detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

Yours sincerely