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Public Prosecutor Mohamed Shawky Ayyad
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
Cairo
Arab Republic of Egypt

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Dear Counsellor,

**Tawfik Ghanem has been arbitrarily detained since 21 May 2021 solely because of his legitimate media work, as the former regional director of Anadolu Agency, a state-run Turkish news agency**. Following his arrest, Egyptian authorities subjected Tawfik Ghanem to enforced disappearance for five days during which he was interrogated without a lawyer present about his previous work at Anadolu Agency. Subsequently, he was taken for questioning before a Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) prosecutor in Cairo, who ordered his detention pending investigations in SSSP Case No. 238 of 2021 on charges of «spreading false news,» «misusing social media,» and terrorism-related offences. Since then, authorities renewed his pretrial detention without allowing him to meaningfully challenge the lawfulness of his detention. His pretrial detention has exceeded the maximum limit of two years permissible under Egyptian law.

Since his arrest, authorities have denied him his rights to consult a lawyer of his choosing in private and to adequate defence. Since January 2022, his pretrial detention renewal sessions have been conducted online, with his lawyer present in a courtroom with the judge and Tawfik Ghanem joining via video link from prison, in the presence of prison guards. Even when he was brought to court for his detention renewal hearings before January 2022, he was unable to consult his lawyer in private as he either remained held in an overcrowded waiting area with other prisoners or placed in a glass cage inside the courtroom.

Tawfik Ghanem is held in Badr 1 prison, some 70km northeast of Cairo, and denied access to adequate healthcare. His family said that since his arrest he has lost about 20kg, and that he suffers from several age-related conditions, including diabetes and an enlarged prostate. Before his arrest, he was diagnosed with Osteochondritis Dissecans, a bone disease that affects the joints and requires regular physical therapy, unavailable in prison. He is also suffering from a skin disease and irritation. Despite this, prison authorities have occasionally banned his family from bringing him the medication he requires and other necessities, including medical soap. For his treatment, he is forced to rely mostly on advice from doctors imprisoned with him. He has not been transferred to hospital inside or outside prison despite his family’s multiple requests to do so – even at their own expense – to ensure appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

**I urge you to ensure that Tawfik Ghanem is immediately and unconditionally released and all charges against him dropped as he is detained solely for his media work. Pending his release, he must be granted regular access to his family, lawyers and adequate healthcare, including in outside hospitals if necessary, and held in conditions that comply with international standards for the treatment of prisoners.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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