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

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Dear Counsellor,

**I am writing to express my concern over the arbitrary detention of 71-year-old Yehia Hussein Abdelhady, a prominent opposition politician and former spokesperson of the Civil Democratic Movement, a political opposition alliance**. Authorities are targeting him in relation to his Facebook post published on 22 July in which he wondered how long the military intends to remain silent while Egyptian people live in acute poverty amid the government’s failure and corruption, calling for regime change in the country.

On 31 July, policemen in plain clothes arrested Yehia Hussein Abdelhady from his friend’s car while both were heading to a political event in Al-Karama political party’s headquarters in Cairo, Egypt’s capital. Policemen neither showed an arrest warrant nor informed Yehia Hussein Abdelhady of the reasons for his arrest. They also refused to identify themselves. On the same day, a Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) prosecutor interrogated him in relation to charges of «joining a terrorist group», publishing «false news», «inciting the commission of a terrorist crime», «misuse of social media», and «funding terrorism». Evidence against him by the National Security Agency (NSA), a specialized police force, presented to the SSSP included screenshots of social media posts critical of the government attributed to him. A SSSP prosecutor questioned him about the social media post published on 22 July in which he called for regime change. After interrogations, the prosecutor ordered his pretrial detention for 15 days pending investigations. Yehia Hussein Abdelhady is held in 10th of Ramadan prison and has yet to be permitted visits by his family, amid concerns over his age-related health conditions, including diabetes and a heart condition.

This is not the first time that Egyptian authorities target Yehia Hussein Abdelhady. In 2018, prosecutors initiated criminal investigations against him on charges of insulting the president, disturbing public order, and publishing «false news» in connection with a social media post critical of President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. In 2019, authorities arrested him after the Civil Democratic Movement called for the release of its detained members. He was released from arbitrary detention in June 2022 following a presidential pardon, after 42 months of unjust imprisonment.

**I urge you to ensure that Yehia Hussein Abdelhady is immediately and unconditionally released and all charges against him dropped as he is being detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression. The Egyptian authorities must refrain from using counterterrorism legislation to target peaceful critics and keeping them in pretrial detention indefinitely.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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