



BY AIRMAIL

President of the Arab Republic of
Egypt,
H.E. Abdel Fattah el-Sisi,
Abedine Palace
CAIRO, **EGYPT**

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Amsterdam, 16 February 2015

Subject: Sentencing of Ms. Mahienour El-Massry

Your Excellency,

Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent and non-political Dutch foundation that seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession.

Lawyers for Lawyers is concerned about the situation of our colleague, human rights lawyer Ms. Mahienour El-Massry, who was, together with two colleagues, recently prosecuted and sentenced. We have reason to believe that the trial against her is connected to her legitimate activities as an attorney.

Ms. Mahienour El-Massry is a human rights lawyer known for her activism in favour of judicial independence and prisoners' rights by organising peaceful protests, using social media to denounce human rights violations and organising support activities for political prisoners.

According to our information, On 9 February 2014, El Raml Misdemeanour Court in Alexandria sentenced lawyers Mahienour El-Masry, Mohamed Ramadan and Loay Mohamed AbdelRahman, and journalist Youssef Shabaan to two years' imprisonment. The sentence can be suspended upon payment of a 5,000 Egyptian Pounds fine (approximately €580) per person.

The four human rights defenders were convicted of "raiding El Raml Police Station", "attacking a police man" and other reportedly fabricated charges relating to "disrupting traffic", "damaging content of the Police Station", "spreading fear and terror among citizens" and "an attempt to smuggle prisoners according to Police Report No 6868 for 2014, Al Raml Misdemeanour.

The charges arose out of their participation in March 2012 in a sit-in staged at the First Raml Police Station. The human rights defenders had come with other human rights defenders and lawyers to ensure the implementation of a prosecutor's decision to release a number of activists who were being held at the police station after being brought there on 29 March 2012 by members of the Freedom and Justice Party, an



Egyptian political party formed by the now-banned Muslim Brotherhood. Upon arrival at the police station, the human rights defenders were verbally abused by the police. Subsequently, they initiated a sit-in inside the police station, demanding that the prosecution investigate the police aggression against them. In response to the sit-in, police verbally and physically assaulted the human rights defenders. Some persons who participated in the sit-in were subsequently released, but Mahienour El-Masry, Youssef Shabaan, Mohamed Ramadan and Loay Mohamed AbdelRahman, as well as six other individuals, were kept in detention.

Lawyers for Lawyers – as well as various other organizations - fear that the criminal proceedings against Mahinour el-Massry and her colleagues serve to curb their legitimate activities as attorney.

As a member of the United Nations Assembly, Egypt is bound by the UN Basic Principles of the Role of Lawyers adopted by the Assembly in 1990. We would draw your attention to Articles 16 and 17 of the Principles in particular which state that:

16. Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference (...) and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

17. Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

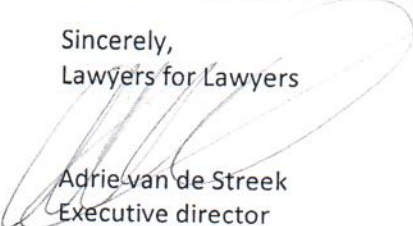
In view of the above, Lawyers for Lawyers urges you to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. Mahienour El-Massry and all human rights lawyers in Egypt;
- ii. Release Ms. Mahienour El-Massry immediately and unconditionally, as well as all human rights lawyers currently in detention, if their detention is only aimed at curtailing their human rights activities;
- iii. Put an end to all acts of harassment, including at the judicial level, against Ms. Mahienour El-Massry and all human rights lawyers in Egypt;

We thank you for your attention to this very important matter. We are confident of your good will and sense of justice and will continue to monitor this case closely.

On behalf of the President of Lawyers for Lawyers, Phon van den Biesen,

Sincerely,
Lawyers for Lawyers


Adrie van de Streek
Executive director