



BY AIRMAIL

President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
H.E. Adly Mansour
Abedine Palace
CAIRO, **EGYPT**

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Amsterdam, 13 June 2014

Subject: Trial and detention of Ms. Mahienour El-Massry

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L), an independent and non-political Dutch foundation which supports lawyers who are threatened or suppressed in the execution of their legal profession all over the world. L4L is committed to ensuring the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession. In that context, Lawyers for Lawyers respectfully would like to express its grave concern about the situation of our colleague, lawyer Ms. Mahienour El-Massry.

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, Ms. Mahienour El-Massry is accused of "assaulting security forces". In March 2013, El-Massry and other lawyers went to Raml police station to provide legal assistance to three activists who were arrested and sent to the police by supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood. The lawyers were attacked by the police in the police station and Ms. El-Massry was detained briefly before the Prosecution decided to release her and the others. The case was only referred to court on May 8, 2014, but the appointed judge resigned from the bench, and the next hearing before a different circuit is scheduled for June 16, 2014.

In this context, Lawyers for Lawyers urges your government to recognize the valuable role played by lawyers and to promote and support their work in line with the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in 1990.

Paragraphs 16 and 17 of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers state that the Government is under an obligation *'to ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or*



improper interference'. Further: 'Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities'.

These principles are universally applicable. Therefore, your government is under an obligation to adequately protect and support its lawyers.

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