

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

**Brussels, 22 June 2015**

**Re: Concerns regarding the sentencing of Ms Mahienour El-Massry, a human rights lawyer**

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it also has associate and observer representatives from a further thirteen European countries' bars.

The CCBE places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. We are particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE would like to express its concerns regarding the sentencing of Ms Mahienour El-Massry, a human rights lawyer known for her activism in favour of judicial independence and prisoners' rights.

According to our information, in March 2013, Ms El-Massry, along with 9 other human rights activists, went to El Raml police station in Alexandria to provide legal assistance to three lawyers who had been arrested and sent to the police by supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood. Ms El-Massry was detained briefly at the station before the Prosecution decided to release her and the other activists. On 8 May 2014, she was referred to court on charges of "assaulting security forces". Her trial was postponed several times until, on 9 February 2015, the El Raml Misdemeanour Court in Alexandria sentenced Ms El-Massry, together with the other activists involved to 2 years in jail. Ms El-Massry filed a demurrer to challenge the abovementioned sentence. On 11 May 2015 the El Raml Misdemeanour Court of Appeal in Alexandria heard the appeal of Ms El-Massry and the other defendants.

We understand that, on 31 May 2015, the El Raml Misdemeanour Court of Appeal sentenced Ms Mahienour El-Massry to 1 year and 3 months in prison. She was convicted along with the other 9 persons on charges of storming El Raml police station and assaulting police officers, as well as torching the Freedom and Justice Party headquarters in March 2013, "*protesting without authorization*", "*disrupting traffic*", "*damaging content of the Police Station*", "*attacking security forces*", "*spreading fear and terror among citizens*" and "*attempt to smuggle prisoners*".

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your attention the following Principles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Principle 16 states that:

*Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

Furthermore, Principle 23 states that:

*Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognized standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you to review and overturn the conviction against Ms Mahienour El-Massry, and to guarantee her security and physical and psychological integrity. In addition, the CCBE requests you to take all necessary measures to guarantee that all lawyers in Egypt are entitled to freedom of expression without fear of reprisal, hindrance, intimidation or harassment.

I look forward to hearing from your Excellency urgently.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria ŚLAZAK', written in a cursive style.

**Maria ŚLAZAK**  
President