

**Prime Minister Hazem AlBeblawi
Magles El Shaab St., Kasr El Aini St.
Cairo, Egypt**

Brussels, 24 September 2013

Re: Concerns regarding the arbitrary arrest of human rights lawyer Mr Haitham Mohamadein

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 observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concern over the arbitrary arrest and the ongoing investigation against Mr Haitham Mohamadein, a prominent human rights lawyer and labour rights defender who through his affiliation with the El Nadim Centre for the Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence provided pro bono legal assistance to victims of human rights violations.

According to the information that we received, on 5 September 2013, Mr Mohamadein was arrested by the Egyptian military at a checkpoint in Suez while he was travelling on a bus from Cairo, and then transferred to Faisal police station in Giza. According to the information we received, neither the military authorities nor the police gave any explanation regarding the reason for his arrest or his detention for two days without any formal charge.

On 7 September, following an order of the General Prosecutor in Suez, Mr Haitham Mohamadein was released without charges or bail; however the CCBE has been informed that his release was described as "temporary", pending an investigation by the National Security service regarding his possession of papers that allegedly "threatened national security".

The CCBE welcomes the Prosecutor's decision to release Haitham Mohamadein without charges or bail; however we are alarmed by the fact that Mr Mohamadein has been arbitrary arrested and detained in the first place, and that the investigation against him is still pending.

In addition, the CCBE notes with concern the involvement in this case of the National Security Service, established in 2011 after the dissolution of the State Security Intelligence, which was notorious for targeting human rights defenders.

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

Article 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, Article 17 states that:

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, the CCBE respectfully urges your Excellency to take effective steps to ensure that the case against Mr Haitham Mohamadein is immediately dropped and the investigation closed. The CCBE also implores you to take all necessary measures to guarantee that human rights lawyers in Egypt are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities, in all circumstances, without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Tsouroulis', written in a cursive style.

EVANGELOS TSOUROULIS
CCBE President