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31 July 2025

Egypt: Relentless harassment and judicial persecution of Ahmed Douma

On 28 July 2025, Ahmed Douma was summoned by the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP). After a lengthy interrogation, he was released on bail, but his case remains ongoing. This incident of judicial harassment is a part of a broader pattern of reprisals against Ahmed Douma since his release from prison in 2023, which includes repeated summons, surveillance, and a travel ban.

[Ahmed Douma](#) is a prominent Egyptian human rights defender, poet, and writer who became a symbol of resistance during the 2011 uprising. His activism began in 2009, when he was arrested, tortured, and sentenced to one year in prison by a military court for joining a peaceful solidarity mission to Gaza. He was arbitrarily detained in 2013 under Egypt's repressive protest law, subjected to torture, denied medical care, and held in solitary confinement for four years. In 2015, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison following an unfair trial, a verdict upheld in 2020 despite international condemnation. Though released under a presidential pardon in August 2023, he remains under a travel ban and faces ongoing judicial harassment and surveillance aimed at silencing his activism.

On 28 July 2025, Ahmed Douma was summoned for the third time in recent months by the SSSP. Neither he nor his lawyers were informed of the charges prior to the interrogation, raising serious concerns about due process and the fairness of the proceedings. After a lengthy interrogation in the presence of his legal team, it became clear that the charges brought against him are vaguely defined and commonly used in Egypt to criminalise peaceful expression. They include “spreading false news,” “disturbing public peace,” “causing confusion,” “inciting fear among citizens,” “undermining the country's prestige,” and “casting doubt on state institutions.” Ahmed Douma was released on bail of 50,000 Egyptian pounds (approximately €900). The case remains ongoing.

In addition to these judicial measures, Ahmed Douma continues to be subjected to daily surveillance by security agents, in clear violation of his right to privacy and freedom of movement. Since his release, he has filed multiple complaints detailing the violations he endured during previous arrests and periods of detention, including torture and ill-treatment, as well as the ongoing infringements of his civil, political, and socio-economic rights. A few months ago, Ahmed Douma was also physically assaulted in the street by individuals believed to be plainclothes security agents. He has filed formal complaints, continuing to speak out publicly through online platforms. However, none of these complaints have been answered nor investigated to date. On the opposite, the legal proceedings brought against him, many of which have been initiated by the same actors responsible for his persecution, continue to be rapidly pursued by the Public Prosecutor's Office.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the constant prosecution and continued harassment of Ahmed Douma, viewing it as a clear act of reprisal by the Egyptian authorities for his legitimate and peaceful work as a human rights defender committed to the causes of freedom and justice in Egypt and the wider region. His prosecution reflects a broader pattern of restrictions on the rights to

freedom of expression and assembly, as well as systematic harassment and reprisals against human rights defenders and peaceful activists in Egypt. Of particular concern is the increasing use of prohibitively high bail amounts, like in this case, which appears to be a deliberate strategy to exert financial pressure on human rights defenders, many of whom already face precarious economic conditions. This tactic is designed to silence dissent and force human rights defenders to abandon their human rights work by deepening their socio-economic isolation and marginalisation within their community.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Egypt to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally drop all charges against human rights defender Ahmed Douma;
2. Conduct an independent and transparent investigation into the violations Ahmed Douma suffered during and after his detention;
3. Take all necessary measures to guarantee his safety as well as his physical and mental health;
4. Cease the targeting of human rights defenders in Egypt and ensure they can carry out their human rights activities and exercise their right to freedom of expression without fear of reprisals or threats, in accordance with Egypt's international human rights obligations and commitments.

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