



Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition *Defending Women Defending Rights*

UPDATE: Woman human rights defender Sanaa Seif starts a hunger strike

The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition has grave concerns for the wellbeing of Ms Sanaa Seif, a prominent Egyptian Woman Human Rights Defender, who began a hunger strike on 28 August 2014 to protest the *Protest and Public Assembly Law*. Ms Seif is currently being held in Qanater prison.

Ms Seif was one of seven women defenders who were arrested on 21 June 2014 while participating in a peaceful demonstration calling for the repeal of the law, which essentially grants security officials and authority figures the discretion to ban any protest without justifying the grounds for banning them. It also allows police officers to forcibly disperse any protest, and sets heavy prison sentences for peaceful protest and expression.

Yara Sallam, Hanan Mustafa Mohamed, Salwa Mahriz, Samar Ibrahim, Nahid Sherif (known as Nahid Bebo), Fikreya Mohamed (known as Rania El-Sheikh) also remain in custody awaiting trial, which has been set for 13 September 2014.

Ms Seif's decision to begin the hunger strike has been prompted by the death of her father, human rights defender Mr Ahmed Seif El-Islam and continued imprisonment of her brother, human rights defender Mr Alaa Abd El-Fattah, who also began an open hunger strike on 18 August 2014.

The WHRDIC urges:

- Egyptian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the women human rights defenders and drop all charges directed at them stemming from the legitimate exercise of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.
- Egyptian authorities to take all measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Ms. Sanaa Seif and the other women human rights defenders.

For more information

WHRDIC statement:

Coalition condemns arrest of WHRDs in Cairo

<http://defendingwomen-defendingrights.org/2014/06/30/coalition-condemns-arrest-of-whrds-in-cairo/>

Notes

The Women Human Rights Defender International Coalition is a resource and advocacy

network supporting women defenders worldwide. We have 29 members:

Amnesty International (AI)
Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD)
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM ASIA)
The Association for Progressive Communications (APC)
Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)
BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights (BAOBAB)
Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR)
Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)
Coalition of African Lesbians (CAL)
Front Line Defenders
Human Rights First
Information Monitor (INFORM)
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)
International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAW-AP)
Isis International
ISIS Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (ISIS-WICCE)
Just Associates (JASS)
The Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM)
MADRE
Peace Brigades International
Rainbow Rights Project (R-Rights), Inc.
Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights (UAF)
Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML)
Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights
Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice (WIGJ)
Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC)
World Organisation against Torture (OMCT)