

Egypt: Article 55 Coalition condemns killing of Egyptian citizen at Cairo's Dar Al-Salam police station; urges Penal Code review to criminalize torture

The Article 55 Coalition was formed to protect the dignity and humanity of the Egyptian citizens in detention centers, rehabilitation centers, and prisons. This reflects the rampant use of torture as a systematic policy by the Egyptian authorities, undermining constitutional articles and legal texts.

In response to the death of an Egyptian citizen named Ramy Hussein, who died on Monday, August 7, 2023, inside the Dar Al-Salam police station in Cairo for refusing to act as an informant for the security forces, as reported by his brother.

The deceased's brother, Mohammad Hussein, wrote a post on Facebook stating that his brother died inside Dar Al-Salam police station at the hands of an officer named Abdurrahman Ragaei, who tortured him for refusing to work as an informant for the security forces. "Dar Al-Salam police station killed my brother. Ramy, my brother, was killed. Dar Al-Salam department killed him, and what was his sin? Because he refused to inform on others." Mohammad wrote on Facebook.

Mohammad posted a picture of his brother's body carried on a medical stretcher with blood flowing from his head and signs of torture on his body.

Following these posts, security forces from Cairo investigations arrested Mohammad and deleted his posts in an attempt to pressure the family into not accusing the individuals at the Dar Al-Salam police station of murdering Ramy. There are fears that Mohammad might face a similar fate to his brother.

The Egyptian Ministry of Interior, as usual, denied in a statement that the death was a result of torture. They claimed Ramy died from Tuberculosis, leading to a sharp drop in his blood circulation and heart failure. The family refuted these claims, insisting that Ramy was not suffering from Tuberculosis and that evident signs of torture were visible on his body.

The undersigned organizations emphasize that the Egyptian authorities, particularly the Ministry of the Interior, frequently issue such "fabricated" statements. They highlight that deaths attributed to circulatory failure might be consequences of torture. Nonetheless, Egypt has obligations under international treaties it has ratified, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture.

Additionally, Egyptian authorities are obliged to implement proactive measures to safeguard victims of torture. This includes undertaking comprehensive, impartial, and prompt investigations

into torture and maltreatment claims, and, when justified, leveling criminal charges against those implicated in these crimes.

Moreover, Article 42 of the Egyptian constitution mandates that all detainees be treated in a manner preserving human dignity and expressly prohibits inflicting physical or moral harm. While the Egyptian Penal Code classifies torture as a criminal act, its definition doesn't align with the standards set by the first article of the Convention against Torture.

The undersigned organizations highlight a concerning increase in the number of deaths within detention centers since the start of 2023, with 23 deaths confirmed by the coalition. This alarming trend suggests that Egyptian authorities are disregarding both international and national laws. Additionally, no official investigations into these incidents have been reported, nor has any official been held accountable. This neglect signals an ingrained culture of systematic torture within Egyptian detention centers and prisons.

Given these concerns, the undersigned organizations strongly condemn the incident involving the Egyptian citizen, Ramy Hussein. They demand a thorough and transparent investigation into his death and insist on holding those responsible accountable. The Egyptian authorities must put an end to the pervasive torture within their detention facilities and prisons, ensuring that anyone resorting to such practices is brought to justice and addressing the issue of impunity.

The undersigned organizations also urge the Egyptian authorities to review the legal provisions related to torture in the Egyptian Penal Code and align them with Egypt's signed international obligations.

Lastly, the undersigned organizations call upon the international community and UN mechanisms to pressure the Egyptian authorities to allow periodic, transparent, and neutral visits to detention sites, in an attempt to curb the ongoing human rights violations in these facilities.

Article 55 Coalition <https://www.facebook.com/Article55egypt>

(Committee for Justice (CFJ), El Shehab Center for Human Rights (SHR), Egyptian Network for Human Rights, Their Right, We Record, HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement, Arab Foundation for Civil and Political Rights-Nedal)