

## **Hisham Kassem continues hunger strike for the fourteenth day protesting against the arbitrary practices of the Egyptian authorities towards him.**

The undersigned organisations hold the Egyptian authorities accountable for ensuring Mr. Kassem's safety and well-being. He began his hunger strike on August 22, 2023, after being transferred to the Tenth of Ramadan Prison on unfounded charges fabricated by Egyptian security personnel. We strongly urge the immediate release of Mr. Kassem and an end to the intimidation and persecution of political opponents and human rights defenders.

Kassem had notified his family and lawyer on September 4, 2023, that he began a hunger strike on August 22, 2023, in protest against the repressive practices of the Egyptian authorities towards him, which aim to harass and morally assassinate him since the establishment of the Free Current movement in early June. Mr. Hisham Qasim has been held in pretrial detention since August 20, in a case falsely accusing him of defamation, verbal assault, and insult against public officials. His first trial session was held on September 2, 2023, and was adjourned to the following Saturday, September 9, 2023.

Mr. Hisham Kassem has faced a smear campaign on state-affiliated channels due to his harsh criticisms of the Egyptian government's policies. This campaign reached its peak when three officers from the Sayeda Zeinab Police Department falsely accused Mr. Hisham Qasim of verbally assaulting them and harassing them on social media while he was physically present at the police station. The undersigned organisations hereby condemn the arbitrary practices against Mr. Kassem, including the physical and moral targeting, fabrication of charges, and the obstinacy exhibited during the litigation process. We hold the Egyptian authorities fully responsible for the safety of Mr. Hisham Kassem, who is 64 years old and has been on a consecutive fourteen-day hunger strike. We call on international and regional human rights mechanisms to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Hesham Kassem.

Signatory organisations:

- Justice Support Foundation
- Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms
- Egyptian Forum for Human Rights
- Humena for Human Rights and Civil Participation
- Egyptian Front for Human Rights
- Law and Democracy Support Foundation
- Virtual Activism Incorporated
- Arabic Center for Law and Society Studies
- AL-Nadeem Center
- Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies
- International Institute for Media and Freedom of Expression.
- EgyptWide for Human Rights