



JOINT STATEMENT | CSOs strongly condemn the use of travel bans against human rights defenders in Egypt

09 Nov 2016, Brussels.

The undersigned organisations strongly condemn the travel ban against Malek Adly, prominent Egyptian human rights lawyer and director of the [Lawyers Network of the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights \(ECESR\)](#).

On 2 November 2016, after his passport had already been stamped at the departures of Cairo International Airport, Malek Adly was informed by the Egyptian Security that a travel ban had been placed upon him and that he was prevented from boarding his flight. He was given no explanations about the reasons behind the travel ban, he was questioned by the security and had his bag searched.

Our organisations denounce the systematic use of travel bans by the Egyptian government against human rights defenders and civil society in Egypt as a tool to crackdown against the independent civil society. Malek Adly's case is not isolated, and the list [of human rights defenders prevented from travelling](#) abroad is worryingly long.

This incident is part of a wider crackdown against human rights defenders, independent civil society, labor union movement and journalists, perpetuated by the Egyptian government that risks to bring to a complete eradication of the human rights community in Egypt. While civil society, human rights defenders, journalists and independent unions are the cornerstone of a pluralist and democratic society, and essential to the realization of national reform processes, the Egyptian government is heavily shutting down civic space and systematically violating the rule of law on security and counter-terrorism grounds. The recent ruling of the Cairo Criminal Court in favor of the [asset freezing of prominent human rights organisations](#) and human rights defenders is one of the most worrying developments.

In this context, our organisations urge the Egyptian government:

- To immediately **lift the travel ban against Malek Adly and against all other human rights defenders and journalists in Egypt** in reprisal for merely engaging in peaceful activities;
- To put an end to all acts of harassment against human rights defenders, journalists and civil society and to **immediately and unconditionally revoke the asset freeze measures as part of the 173/2011 criminal case**, also known as 'foreign funding case'.

Moreover, in the context of EU-Egypt bilateral cooperation, we call upon the EU institutions and its Member States:

- To **urge the Egyptian government to lift the travel bans** and stop all measures of judicial and administrative harassment linked to the foreign funding case;
- **Make the closure of the foreign funding case a condition for the pursuit and conclusion of the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities and the holding of an Association Council;**
- To **free all detained journalists and human rights activists** in Egypt.