

# Solidarity with Mahienour and Moatasem Jailed for defending the right to protest and strike

Campaigning lawyer Mahienour el-Massry and leading trade unionist Moatasem Medhat have been jailed for two years by an Egyptian court, for breaching a law on public gatherings imposed by the British colonial authorities in 1914.

Mahienour and Moatasem have been in jail since their trial in November and will appeal the sentence on 13 January. Lawyers Asmaa Naeem and Waleed El Ammary, and activist Ziad Aboul Fadl also received three year sentences in absentia. In addition to the 1914 Assembly Law, the prosecution claimed the defendants breached the repressive 2013 Protest Law, engaged in “thuggery” and “insulted the President”.

The only witness for the prosecution is a police officer, whose written report on the incident stated that the defendants had left before he arrived at the scene.

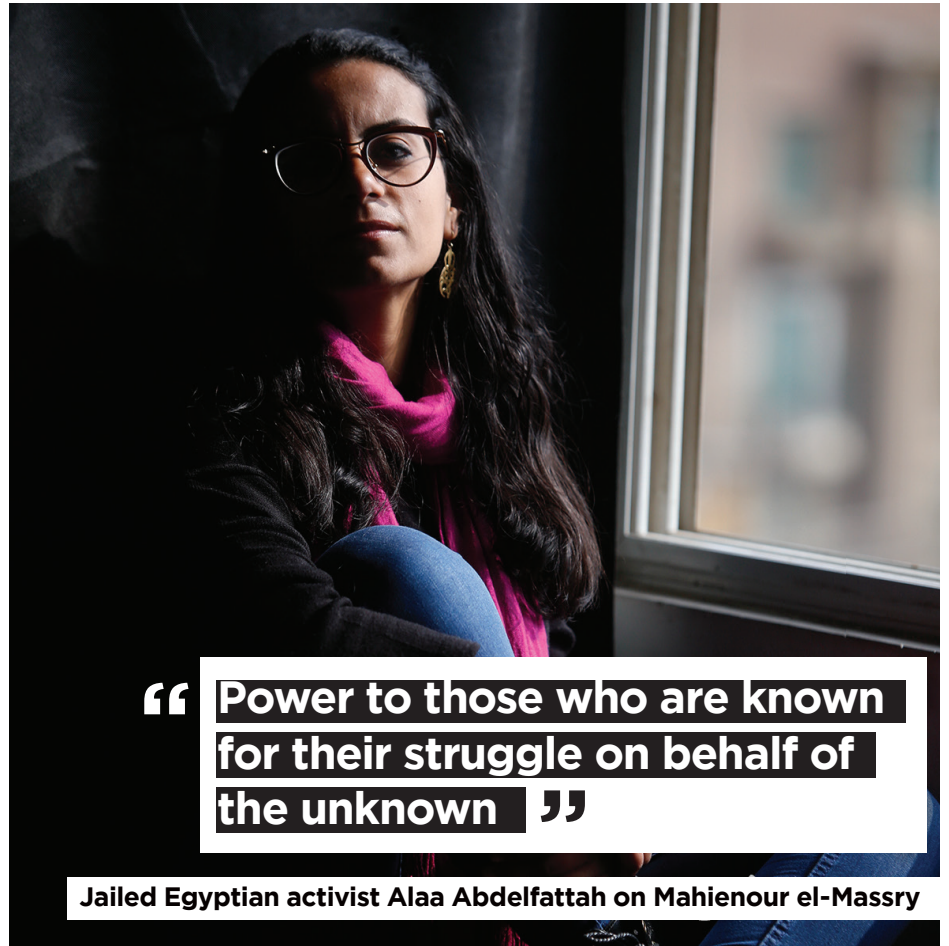
The charges against Mahienour and Moatasem and their colleagues relate to a demonstration during the wave of protests against the transfer of the Tiran and Sanafir Islands from Egypt to Saudi Arabia, but it is clear that the real goal is to lock up campaigners who put themselves at risk to defend workers and activists persecuted by the authorities.

Mahienour, an award-winning human rights lawyer, is well-known for her work defending activists, trade unionists and Syrian refugees from persecution by the authorities.

She was jailed in 2015 in a case connected with protests over the acquittal of policemen charged with the murder of Khaled Said, the young Alexandrian man whose death in 2010 sparked the protest movement which paved the way for the 2011 uprising.

Trade unionist Moatasem Medhat provided evidence to the court that he was not even present at the protest, yet has received a two-year jail sentence.

A member of the Bread and Freedom Party, Moatasem is one of the founders of the independent trade union at the Lord Company shaving equipment factory, serving as secretary to the union before being victimised and sacked for his trade union activism.



He is also a member of the executive committee of the Permanent Conference of Alexandrian Workers, a regional federation of independent unions.

Mahienour and Moatasem are only two of tens of thousands jailed on trumped-up charges by Abdelfattah al-Sisi's authoritarian military regime.

Amnesty International details how the Egyptian authorities used “mass arbitrary arrests to suppress demonstrations and dissent, detaining journalists, human rights defenders and protesters.” Security forces regularly engage in torture, forced disappearances and extrajudicial killings, and has recently launched a homophobic crackdown on people assumed to be LGBT+.

## Take action

- **Share campaign news and resources from the FreeMahienour Facebook page and Egypt Solidarity Initiative**
- **Pass a resolution in your union branch calling for the release of Mahienour, Moatasem and all other political prisoners in Egypt**
- **Send a protest message to the Egyptian embassy in your country**

[www.egyptsolidarityinitiative.org](http://www.egyptsolidarityinitiative.org)

**#FreeMahienour**

**#FreeMoatasem**

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