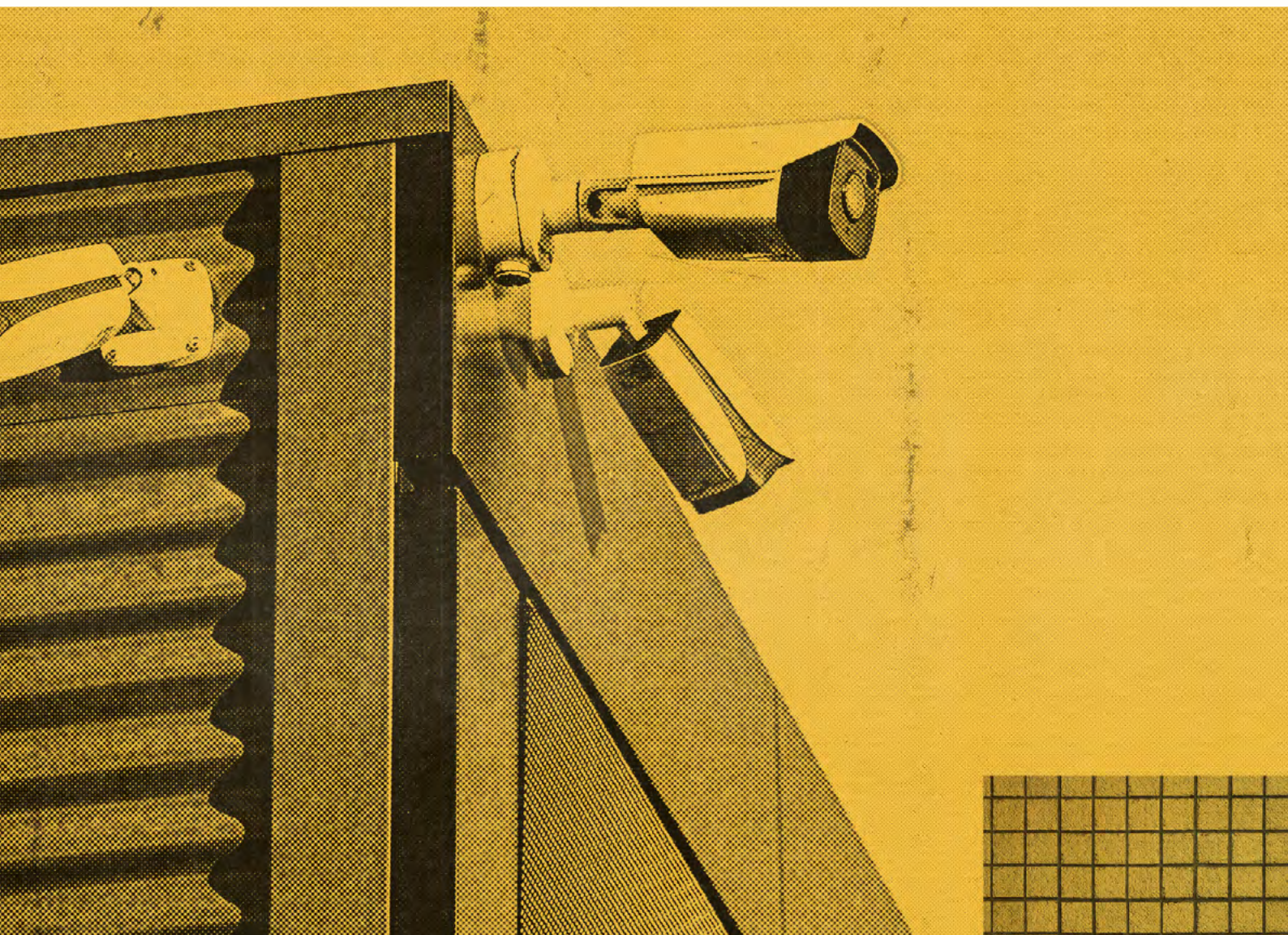


Casefile:

Egypt/UK Human Rights Cases of Concern



British nationals, residents and families
targeted by the Egyptian state

July 2024

FairSquare



This case file details four current cases of Egyptian activists, writers and human rights defenders facing serious abuse at the hands of their government.

They all either hold British nationality, live in the UK, or are members of British families.

Two of the four are in Egypt facing direct human rights violations, subjected to long-term arbitrary, unlawful imprisonment and travel bans. Two are living in the UK, where they have been subjected to “transnational repression” by the Egyptian authorities, in the form of reprisals against their families in Egypt or threats of violence, in an attempt to silence their criticisms of the regime.

The UK has a close strategic relationship with the Egyptian authorities but has proved unwilling or unable to use this relationship in

support of these brave individuals, all with strong ties to the UK, who are being targeted for their work in support of democracy and human rights.

In the case of Alaa Abd el-Fattah, the UK’s diplomatic efforts have failed to secure access to a British national in prison.

In other cases, the government has declined to support individuals on UK soil facing harassment and intimidation from a foreign state. They have even rejected the asylum claim

of one man, arguing that he should go to live in Saudi Arabia. Karim Ennarah, meanwhile, has been unable to rejoin his wife in the UK for three years due to a travel ban which remains in place.

The incoming UK government has an opportunity to put its relationship with Egypt on a new footing, one in which it stands up for the rights of British nationals, residents and families.

Individuals targeted by the Egyptian government with UK connections:

01.
Abdelrahman
Ayyash

02.
Ahmed
Salem

03.
Alaa Abd
el-Fattah

04.
Karim
Ennarah

Name:
**Abdelrahman
Ayyash**

Occupation:
**Human Rights
Researcher, Writer**

Current Location:
Scotland

Status:
**Egyptian national
seeking asylum in
the UK**



Abdelrahman Ayyash is a human rights researcher and expert on the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and currently works for the Middle East Democracy Centre. Abdelrahman Ayyash's family has been repeatedly targeted in acts of transnational repression in reprisal for his writing and research. Most recently in 2022, Ayyash published a series of tweets related to his work on Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, after which Ayyash's father was arrested, interrogated, and temporarily imprisoned. Ayyash's father was charged and later acquitted of joining a terrorist group. Ayyash's father's house was previously raided in 2021 after Ayyash had participated on a panel in Washington at an event discussing the 2011 Tahrir Square protests. UN human rights experts have stated that the judicial harassment of Ayyash's father "appears to be directly linked to his legitimate work as a human rights defender".

Response of the UK government:

The UK government has rejected Ayyash's asylum application on the basis that due to his wife's nationality, he can legally live in Saudi Arabia. Given the high risk that he would be arrested by the Saudi government and deported back to Egypt, the actions of the UK government in this instance not only fail to protect Ayyash from transnational repression but risk enabling further abuses and imprisonment.

Name:
**Ahmed
Salem**

Occupation:
**Director of the
Sinai Foundation
for Human Rights**

Current Location:
England

Status:
**Egyptian national
granted asylum
in the UK**



Ahmed Salem is the executive director of the London-based Sinai Foundation for Human Rights which monitors human rights abuses in the Sinai peninsula, Egypt. In February 2024, Ahmed's NGO published footage from south of the Rafah border which appeared to show preparations being made to receive an influx of Palestinian refugees. State-aligned Egyptian media publicly accused Ahmed of having links to terrorist organisations and spreading misinformation. Ahmed received a threatening call from a government-appointed clan leader in the Sinai, warning him that he "is not far from reach even abroad". Amnesty International called for an immediate end to reprisals against critics living abroad such as Ahmed. The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders described the attacks against Ahmed as "a dangerous smear campaign linking him to terrorist organisations in relation to his peaceful work".

Response of the UK government:

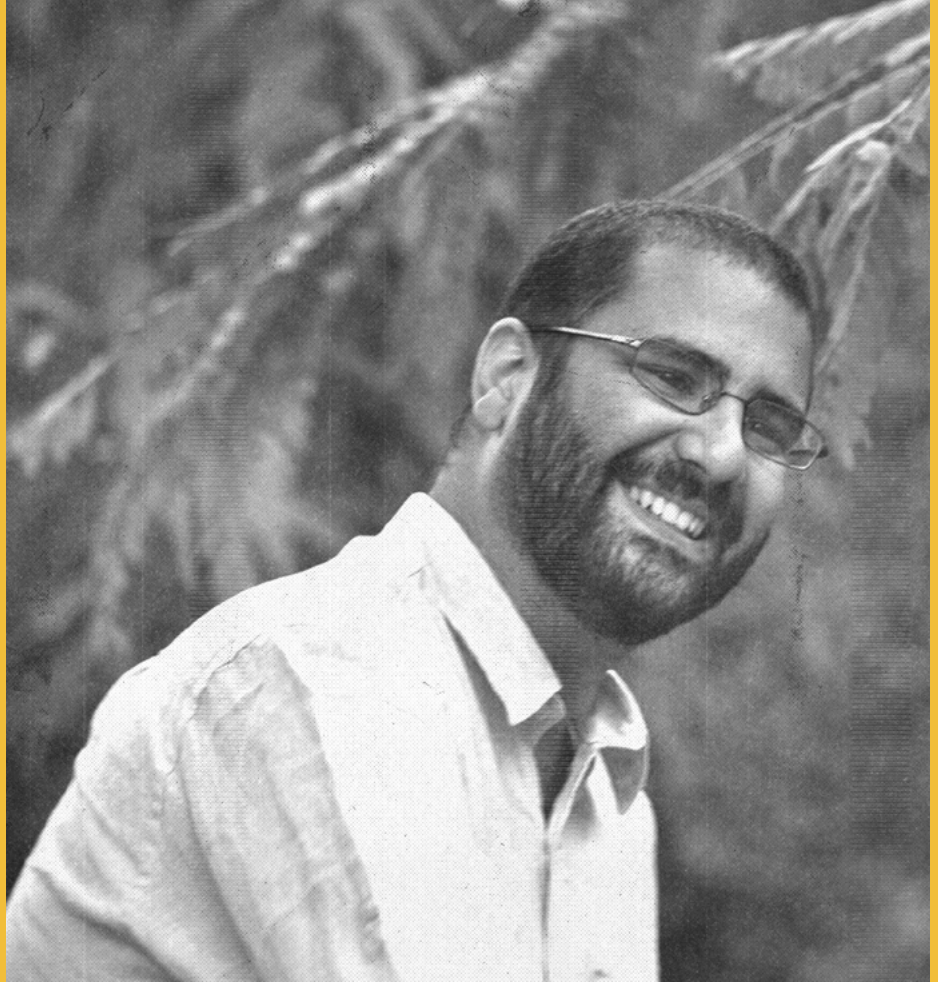
In April 2024, Ahmed's MP raised these threats with the Foreign Office and sought diplomatic support for Ahmed. However, the UK Middle East Minister declined to commit to raising the matter with Egyptian counterparts and instead recommended that Ahmed raise the matter with his local police force, without explaining how they could help address threats made from Egypt.

Name:
**Alaa Abd
el-Fattah**

Occupation:
Writer

Current Location:
**Wadi Natron prison,
Egypt**

Status:
**British-Egyptian
dual national
imprisoned since
29 September 2019**



Alaa Abd el-Fattah is a British-Egyptian pro-democracy writer who has spent much of the past decade behind bars in Egypt for his writings on freedom, the law, technology and economics. In December 2021, Alaa was sentenced to five years imprisonment following a grossly unfair trial for a Facebook post about torture in prisons. Alaa is an Amnesty International prisoner of conscience, and world leaders including 100 UK parliamentarians, 15 US lawmakers, Emmanuel Macron and Olaf Scholz have called for his release. Alaa remains unable to join his 13-year-old son, who lives in Brighton, where he attends a special education needs school.

Response of the UK government:

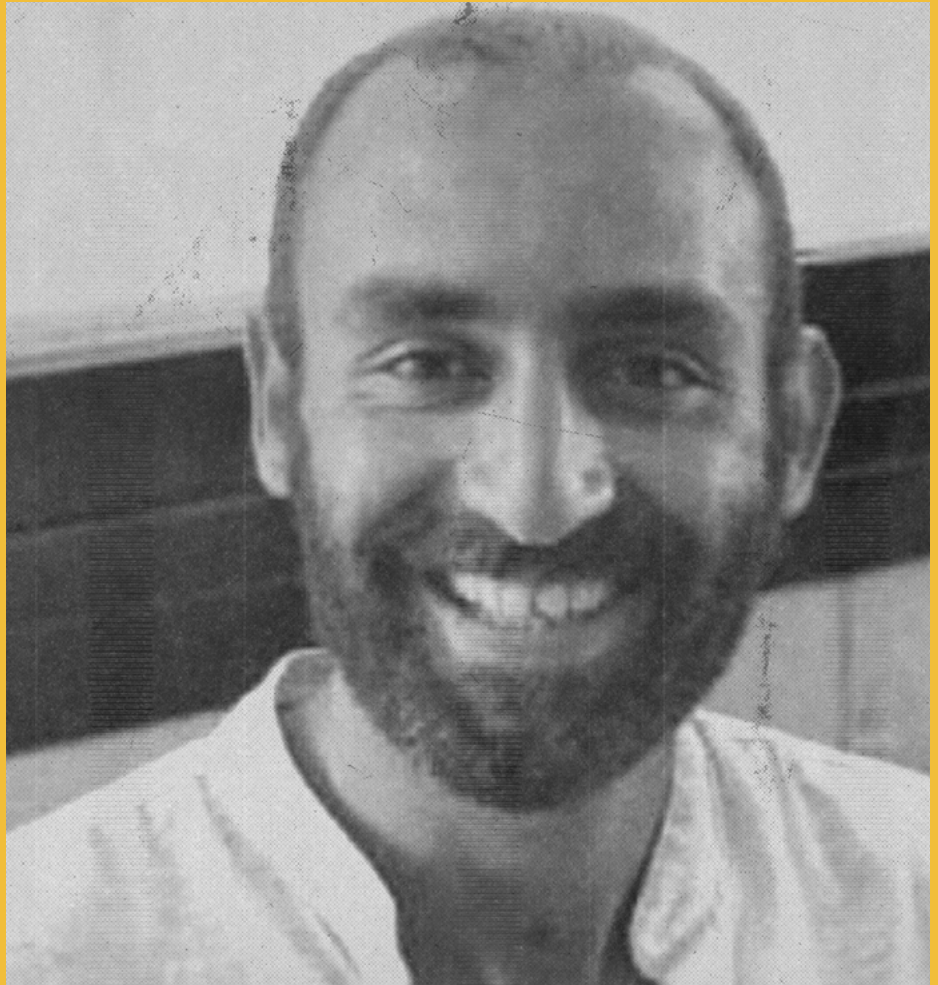
Since Alaa became a British citizen in 2021, British officials have failed to make progress on Alaa's case. Despite three different UK Prime Ministers having raised Alaa's case with the Egyptian President Sisi and publicly calling for his release, no progress has been made to resolve the case, and officials have not even managed to secure a consular visit to their citizen. The UK Government has repeatedly refused to impose any consequences on Egypt and has re-affirmed the UK-Egypt relationship while Alaa remains behind bars.

Name:
**Karim
Ennarah**

Occupation:
**Human rights
researcher**

Current Location:
Egypt

Status:
**Egyptian national under
travel ban, unable to live
with his British spouse in
the UK**



Karim Ennarah is a criminal justice expert who works for the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights and completed his masters degree in the UK. After Karim was arbitrarily arrested in Egypt in November 2020 as a reprisal for meeting British and other diplomats to discuss human rights, the UK government called for his release. When he was released, he tried to fly to the UK to start a new life with his wife, who lives in London but was stopped by officials at Cairo airport, who informed him he was blocked from leaving the country. Over three years later, Karim remains under a travel ban and asset freeze, separated from his wife who lives in the UK, and with no way to challenge the ban, a key tactic used by Egyptian authorities to throttle Civil Society.

Response of the UK government:

The UK government says it has raised the case with Egyptian authorities but has failed to make progress towards a lifting of the ban and asset freeze. Rushanara Ali MP, the representative of Karim's wife Jess Kelly, has written to the government on multiple occasions and raised the case in parliament.

FairSquare

