

Brussels, 16 JUL. 2018  
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Ms Ana Gomes MEP  
European Parliament  
Rue Wiertz 60  
1047 Brussels

*Dear Ana,*

Thank you for your letter of 23 May concerning the case of Ms Ola al-Qaradawi and her husband Mr Hosam Khalaf. We are following the human rights situation in Egypt very closely and are aware of this specific case.

Let me first assure you that the EU is strongly committed to the respect and protection of human rights in all partner countries. In this respect, we have placed a strong emphasis on the respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms and the importance of implementing all the guarantees stipulated by the 2014 Constitution and Egypt's international obligations in the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities<sup>1</sup> that were adopted during the EU-Egypt Association Council on 25 July 2017. This was also reflected in the EU position for the above-mentioned Association Council.

Last January, the EU-Egypt Sub-committee on Political Matters, Human Rights and Democracy, which took place in Cairo, allowed for thorough exchanges with the Egyptian side on issues of key concern for the EU, including long pre-trial detention and poor prison conditions. In February 2018, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, had a meeting with Egypt's Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights in Brussels to follow up on the Dialogue session. They also discussed the need for continued engagement with Egypt in specific priority areas, including enhanced cooperation through exchange of expertise, and capacity building in the field of human rights. Concerns regarding the increasing number of arrests of human rights defenders, political activists and bloggers were also expressed through a Spokesperson statement issued on 30 May 2018<sup>2</sup>. I am also grateful for the fact that, during a recent exchange of views between the EP AFET Committee and the Speaker of the Egyptian House of Representatives, several MEPs from different political groups took to the floor to raise human rights issues, some of them making general remarks, others mentioning specific cases.

The EU also continues to actively address the human rights situation in Egypt at the multilateral level through i.a. EU statements delivered at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2017/07/25-eu-egypt-adopt-partnership-priorities/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/45518/statement-spokesperson-situation-egypt\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/45518/statement-spokesperson-situation-egypt_en)

The protection and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law are guiding principles of the EU's external action and policies, and you can count on us to continue to actively promote and defend these principles in our engagement with Egypt as we do with all our neighbours and partners around the world.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Mogherini', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Federica Mogherini