

Brussels, 11 JUL. 2016
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Ms Lynn Boylan MEP
Ms Ana Gomes MEP
Ms Barabara Spinelli MEP
European Parliament
Rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for your letter of 14 June, expressing your concerns about the travel ban that has been imposed on Mohamed Zaree, the Egypt Director of the Cairo Institute of Human Rights Studies and, more globally, about the crackdown on human rights defenders in Egypt.

I share your concerns and can assure you that the EEAS and our Delegation in Cairo are closely following the human rights situation in Egypt and regularly raise our concerns with the Egyptian authorities bilaterally. The case of Mohamed Zaree has been specifically raised.

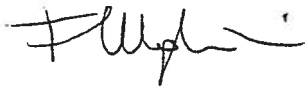
In addition, the EU Delegation maintains regular contacts with civil society organisations and human rights organisations and defenders, including with Mr Mohamed Zaree.

Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms is essential for the EU. We have therefore expressed concerns about the mounting pressure on independent Egyptian civil society organisations, in particular human rights organisations and defenders in my spokesperson's statement on civil society in Egypt of 24 March. In this statement, we specifically underlined the fact that the imposition of travel bans, asset freezes and the summoning of human rights defenders are not in line with Egypt's commitments to promote and respect human rights and fundamental freedoms as guaranteed by its constitution and enshrined in the EU-Egypt Association Agreement, the basis for our partnership.

These same concerns about the mounting pressure on civil society and human rights defenders were highlighted in the statements delivered by the EU at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on 15 March, and more recently, on 22 June.

You can count on me personally, on the EEAS and on our Delegation in Cairo to continue to closely monitor the situation of human rights in Egypt and to continue raising our concerns in this field, including the specific case of Mohamed Zaree, with the Egyptian authorities. We will also continue to insist on the importance of allowing the independent functioning of civil society organisations and human rights defenders, free from the fear of intimidation.

Yours sincerely,

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

Federica Mogherini