

28 June 2016

## **Egypt - Human rights defender Mozn Hassan banned from travel**

On 27 June 2016, human rights defender Ms Mozn Hassan was banned from traveling to Beirut from Cairo International Airport. She had not been officially notified of the travel ban imposed against her beforehand. This follows previous incidents of judicial harassment against [Nazra for Feminist Studies](#) organisation where she serves as an Executive Director, including summons she received in order to appear for questioning on 29 March 2016 in relation to an ongoing foreign funding case.

[Mozn Hassan](#) is an Egyptian human rights defender and the Executive Director of [Nazra for Feminist Studies](#), a group that aims to build an Egyptian feminist movement and supports women human rights defenders through legal and psychological interventions. Mozn has extensively worked on numerous feminist issues in Egypt and the Middle East since 2001 including violence against women in the public space. Mozn Hassan is the recipient of the Charlotte Bunch Women Human Rights Defenders Award in 2013.

In the morning of 27 June, security authorities at Cairo International Airport prevented human rights defender Mozn Hassan from traveling to Beirut. She was invited as a Regional Expert to attend and participate in the Executive Committee meeting for the Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) Regional Coalition for the Middle East and North Africa, scheduled between 27 June and 1 July 2016. The human rights defender had not received prior notification of the travel ban.

Previously on 22 March 2016, in relation to the foreign funding case, three staff members from Nazra for Feminist Studies were summoned to appear for questioning before the investigative judge at New Cairo Court. Mozn Hassan was also summoned to appear before him on 29 March 2016. The judge has decided to schedule a further appointment, pending review of the case, and will then summon Mozn Hassan. The current travel ban imposed against her is believed to be an extension of a series of acts taken initially against her and which will lead to her second summons.

Travel bans have been ordered by the Egyptian judiciary, among other authorities, against leaders and staff members of human rights NGOs in the framework of the ongoing foreign funding case which resumed in March 2016. It is also known as Case No.173, involving forty-one Egyptian organisations which are being investigated, with some of their leaders and staff members being summoned on charges including receipt of illegal foreign funding and working without legal permission. Between February and June 2016, the investigating judge in this case ordered travel bans against human rights lawyer Mr [Gamal Eid](#), journalist and former director of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights Mr [Hossam Bahgat](#) and Egypt director of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies Mr [Mohamed Zarea](#). Travel bans have also been imposed since January 2015 against digital media specialist and human rights defender Ms [Esraa Abdel Fattah](#), human rights defender and lawyer [Hoda Abdelwahab](#), and human rights defenders Messrs [Hossameldin Ali](#), **Ahmed Ghonim** and **Bassem Samir** of the Egyptian Democratic Academy.

Egyptian authorities are increasing their pressure on human rights defenders and journalists using different measures including travel bans, freezes on the bank accounts, and arbitrary detention. Front Line Defenders is concerned by the travel ban imposed on Mozn Hassan and strongly fears that this step may be followed by her interrogation and prosecution.

**Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Egypt to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally remove the travel ban imposed against Mozn Hassan and all other human rights defenders facing travel restrictions in Egypt, as Front Line Defenders believes that they are being restricted solely as a result of their legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Egypt are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.