

The Rt Hon Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer KC  
10 Downing St  
London SW1A 2AB

21 May 2025

Dear Prime Minister,

We are writing as a coalition of 32 organisations concerned with the ongoing arbitrary and unlawful detention of Alaa Abd el-Fattah, the British-Egyptian political prisoner and democracy writer who should have been released from prison in Egypt at the end of his sentence in September 2024.

The hope that we allowed ourselves to feel after you [pressed President Abd el-Fattah al-Sisi for Alaa's release](#) in February has been replaced by devastation that no progress has been made toward Alaa's release and his safe reunion with his family in the United Kingdom.

It is hard to express the depth of our worry for the health and wellbeing of Laila Soueif, Alaa's mother. After years of exercising every other option available trying to free Alaa, Laila entered a hunger strike. It is now nearly eight months since she stopped eating in protest at Alaa's continued arbitrary and unlawful detention. Her hunger strike has taken a terrible toll on her body. We recall how close she came to death in February when she was admitted to hospital, and we fear the worst for her.

It has been three months since you and President al-Sisi agreed to speak again soon. There is no time to lose: this contact must happen now, for the sake of Alaa, his mother, and their whole family. It has been more than five years since Alaa was re-arrested and the Egyptian government still refuses to even abide by international law and provide the British government consular access to Alaa. This is not how alleged partners are supposed to treat each other's citizens.

Prime Minister, we urge you to make clear to President al-Sisi that what happens to Alaa and his mother will have long-lasting and meaningful ramifications beyond their family: both for Egypt's reputation and standing on the international stage, and for the future of its relationship with Britain, including cooperation on tourism, trade, and investment.

Yours sincerely,

Access Now  
ALQST for Human Rights  
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)  
Campaign Against Arms Trade  
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)  
Council for Arab-British Understanding  
DAWN  
Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms  
Egyptian Front for Human Rights  
Egyptian Human Rights Forum (EHRF)  
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)  
El Nadeem Center for Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence  
English PEN  
FairSquare  
Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)  
Human Rights First  
Human Rights Watch

INSM

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), in the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms

MENA Rights Group (MRG)

Middle East Democracy Center (MEDC)

World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), in the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

PEN International

People in Need – Center for Human Rights and Democracy

REDRESS

Reporters Without Borders

REDWORD for Human Rights & Freedom of Expression

Sinai Foundation for Human Rights

The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)