

21 February 2019

Egypt: Ongoing detention of journalist and human rights defender Ahmed Gamal Ziada

On 16 February 2019, the prosecution ordered that the pretrial detention of Egyptian journalist and human rights defender, **Ahmed Gamal Ziada**, be renewed for 15 days in State Security case 67/2019.

[Ahmed Gamal Ziada](#) is a photojournalist, columnist and investigative reporter, who has been particularly active in covering human rights issues. His media work has appeared in Masr Alarabia, Al-Araby Al-Jadeed and Aljazeera. He has been a vocal advocate for freedom of expression and the release of imprisoned journalists in Egypt.

At around 3.30pm on 29 January 2019, Ahmed Gamal Ziada was arrested and detained on arrival at Cairo International Airport. He was held for seven hours without access to food or water before being taken into incommunicado detention for 14 days, to appear before Al Omranyyah Prosecution on 13 February 2019.

On 14 February 2019, the prosecution charged him with publishing and broadcasting false news and ordered that he be detained for 4 days. The human rights defender has denied the charges.

Ahmed Gamal Ziada had attended a media courses in Tunisia in the 6 months prior to his arrest. He returned to Egypt on 29 January to finalise his membership application for the Egyptian Press Syndicate. Upon his arrival in Cairo, members of the Egyptian Security Forces began interrogating the human rights defender.

In December 2015, Ahmed Gamal Ziada was severely wounded in a knife attack near Cairo University metro station. The attack, which was carried out by an unidentified individual, is understood to have been an attempted killing. An effective police investigation into the attack has never been carried out. Ahmed Gamal Ziada and Egyptian rights groups believe that the attack was linked to his critical media work.

Ahmed Gamal Ziada was previously targeted by Egyptian authorities when he was arrested in December 2013 while filming police violence against protesters in Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He was accused of “engaging in violent protests” and “setting fire to Al-Azhar University’s Faculty of Commerce”. He remained in pre-trial detention, where he was subjected to physical violence and torture, for 16 months. He was released in April 2015 after being acquitted of all charges.

Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the arrest and arbitrary detention of Ahmed Gamal Ziada and is seriously concerned about safety and physical well-being.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Egypt to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Gamal Ziada, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful media and human rights work;

2. Ensure that Ahmed Gamal Ziada's treatment, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Ahmed Gamal Ziada;
4. Cease targeting all human rights defenders, journalists and bloggers in Egypt in all circumstances, so that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.