



**INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S MEDIA  
FOUNDATION**

The Honorable Joey Hood  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs  
U.S. Department of State

February 18, 2021

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Hood,

Eight international organizations urgently call for the United States to demand the immediate release of [Solafa Magdy](#), an arbitrarily detained Egyptian journalist, who has been subjected to ill-treatment in prison and is in immediate need of medical attention.

Magdy received the International Women's Media Foundation's Courage in Journalism Award last year for her brave reporting and dedication to press freedom in Egypt and she was awarded the Honorary Citizenship of the City of Paris in December 2020. She was arrested along with her husband, journalist Hossam al-Sayyad, and their friend Mohamed Salah in November of 2019, accused of terrorism related charges and spreading "fake news," charges they deny and that are unfounded. They have been in prison since their arrest, held without a trial, solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression.

Magdy's lawyers submitted a report to Egyptian authorities on January 30 documenting abuses against her including nighttime interrogations while blindfolded and threats against her family in prison. In rare visits with her family, Magdy has appeared weak and unable to walk unassisted. She is experiencing uterine bleeding and has a history of tumors for which she had surgery in 2017. Magdy's lawyers report that when she refused to be an informant, she was threatened with never seeing her husband or seven-year-old son again.

The case of Magdy and her husband has already received considerable international attention. However, this has not resulted in a change in their situation. Given the unique relationship between the United States and Egypt, we believe in the potential impact of a direct intervention of the U.S. government and the leverage that aid and other negotiations afford.

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**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MEDIA FOUNDATION**

1625 K Street NW, Suite 1275, Washington, DC 20006 T +1 202 496 1992 www.iwmf.org



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We urge you, as Acting Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, to raise Magdy, Hossam and Salah's case within the State Department and to engage directly with the Egyptian government to call for their immediate and unconditional release. Pending their release, they would be provided with adequate medical care, and regular access to her families and lawyers and for an investigation into the ill-treatment of Solafa Magdy.

Please let us know how we may help this action on their behalf before it is too late.

Sincerely,

Elisa Lees Munoz  
Executive Director, International Women's Media Foundation

Courtney Radsch  
Advocacy Director, Committee to Protect Journalists

Annie Boyajian,  
Director of Advocacy, Freedom House

Philippe Nassif  
MENA advocacy director  
Amnesty International USA

Neil Hicks  
Senior Director for Advocacy, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

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

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

Wadih Al-Asmar  
President, EuroMed Rights

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