

10 February 2020

Egypt: Human rights defender Patrick George detained and tortured

On 7 February 2020, human rights defender **Patrick George** was detained at Cairo airport and taken into custody by the National Security Agency. He was interrogated for several hours, and reported being subjected to physical abuse and torture by electric shocks. On the next day, the Public Prosecutor of Mansoura ordered his detention on remand for 15 days.

[Patrick George](#) is a human rights defender and researcher at the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR). He advocates for women's rights, as well as the rights of vulnerable groups in Egypt, including the LGBT+ community and the Christian minority. He has also worked on the rights of detainees, and has been involved in several campaigns concerning the violations of civil and political rights in Egypt.

On 7 February 2020, the human rights defender came to Egypt for the first time since commencing his university studies in Italy in August 2019. He was stopped at Cairo airport upon his arrival. He was then taken into custody by the National Security Investigation and his whereabouts remained unknown for 24 hours. It was later revealed that he had been transferred from the airport to a national security facility in Cairo. Patrick George was then interrogated for several hours without the presence of his lawyer. During the interrogation, the human rights defender was subjected to physical abuse and was tortured by electric shocks. On the next day, he was presented before the public prosecutor of Mansoura who ordered his detention on remand for 15 days, pending further investigation. The police issued a statement stating that the detention of Patrick George is based on an arrest warrant issued against him in September 2019.

The human rights defender is facing the charges of 'spreading false news', 'incitement to protest without authorisation', 'incitement to violence and terrorism; and 'calling for the overthrow of the state'. Since his detention, no family visits have been allowed, and he has had very limited access to legal counsel. He is currently detained at Mansoura police station.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the detention of Patrick George, the charges brought against him, as well as the allegations of torture during his interrogation. Front Line Defenders believes that he is being targeted solely as a result of his peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Egypt to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Patrick George and drop all charges against him, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Patrick George, 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. Allow Patrick George immediate and unfettered access to his family and lawyer as well as to the necessary medical attention;

4. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations of physical abuse and torture of Patrick George, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
5. 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, including judicial harassment.

Front Line Defenders Board of Directors

Denis O'Brien, Mary Lawlor, Jim Conway, Maria Mulcahy, Kieran Mulvey, Mary Jane Real (Philippines), David Sykes, Arnold Tsunga (Zimbabwe), Verónica Vidal (Uruguay)

Front Line Defenders International Advisory Council

James L. Cavallaro, Maryam Elahi, Michel Forst, Hina Jilani

Front Line, The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders trading as Front Line Defenders, is registered in Ireland as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. Registered Office: Second Floor, Grattan House, Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin, A94 FA39, Ireland.

Company No. 593190; Registered Charity No. 20204494; CHY 22404