



## **SOAWR COALITION CONDEMNS THE UNFAIR DETENTION OF WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN EGYPT.**

The Solidarity for African Women's Rights Coalition (SOAWR) strongly condemns the unlawful and arbitrary detention of Women Human Rights Defenders in Cairo-Egypt on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2014. The seven Women Human Rights Defenders; Yara Sallam, Sanaa Seif, Hanan Mustafa Mohamed, Salwa Mhriz, Samar Ibrahim, Nahid and Fikreya Mohamed were arrested for protesting peacefully against the Protest and Public Assembly Law and calling for the release of all detainees and imprisoned human rights defenders in Egypt. The women have been charged with organizing a demonstration without prior notice as stipulated by the law and the participation in a demonstration that breached and threatened public security and the interests of citizens amongst other charges<sup>1</sup>.

Since their detention on June 21, 2014, the women have been prevented from contacting their lawyers or families. The authorities have also failed to provide information about defendants' whereabouts in a timely manner upon their transfer from one prison to another. In a hearing on 29 June 2014, the lawyers' request for the provisional release of the defendants was rejected. The decision is unwarranted given the lack of credible evidence linking the defendants to any violent acts, and the low risk of absconding if the defendants were released on bail. Additionally, the Judge exited the courtroom without informing the lawyers of his decision, leaving counsel to obtain information from Court Security that the court session had been postponed until September 13, 2014. This is a clear breach to the detainees' right to a transparent and just trial. In the meantime, the seven detainees remain in prison.

As a state party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, by ratifying the charter in 1984, Egypt is obligated to uphold the principles in the charter that guarantee the protection and right to fair hearing in a court of law. Specifically in the detention of the women human rights defenders, Egypt must uphold Article 6 and Sections (a), (b), (c) of Article 7 of the Charter.

As a result of the above, the SOAWR Coalition condemns the detention of the Human Rights Defenders. Further calling upon the Egyptian Government to;

1. Ensure the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international and regional human rights standards instruments ratified by Egypt.
2. Drop all charges directed at the detainees and put into effect their immediate and unconditional release.

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<sup>1</sup>. <http://www.awid.org/News-Analysis/Announcements2/Statement-from-the-Women-Human-Rights-Defenders-International-Coalition-on-the-Arrest-of-Egyptian-WHRDs>

<http://nazra.org/en/node/327>

3. Guarantee the right of detainees to engage in human rights work and take measures to ensure their protection before the law and in society.

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