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Medical negligence results in the killing of two Egyptian detainees, one of them died with Covid-19

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) said that medical negligence in Egyptian prisons claimed the lives of two detainees within less than 24 hours. The organisation stressed that the overcrowded and poorly ventilated detention centers, are nothing but graves that claim the lives of detainees, one by one.

Death with Covid-19

Safwat Al-Shami, 58, died on Thursday morning, December 31, 2020, as a result of his infection with the Coronavirus, which he contracted inside his detention facility in Shebin El-Kom General Prison in Monufia Governorate, South Delta.

He died just two months before the end of his term, as he spent ten months of detention in poor conditions of detention and amid cruel treatment.

Al-Shami passed away inside the Isolation Unit at Shebin El-Kom Fever Hospital, 15 days after his transfer there due to his infection with the Corona virus. He suffered from medical negligence and poor care in hospital.

The prison administration did not take any practical measures to isolate those who contacted him or limit the spread of the epidemic inside the prison, which resulted in a large number of detainees showing symptoms of the illness without being isolated or given adequate treatment.



Inhuman Treatment

The death of Al-Shami came in less than 24 hours of the death of the detainee Mohamed Sobhi, 74. The authorities arresting him did not consider his old age and poor health conditions which always required medical care as he suffered from "Pulmonary edema" disease, in which fluid accumulates in the lungs, causing shortness of breath, failure of the heart muscle, in addition to having varicose veins.

Sobhi died inside his detention facility in the Awal Zagazig police station in Sharqiya governorate, where he received inhuman treatment, in addition to being deprived of medicines which put his life in grave danger.

Potential Disaster

AOHR UK indicated that the news of successive deaths inside Egyptian prisons are not surprising, as the Egyptian detention facilities lack international standards for places of detention suitable for humans, given the huge overcrowding inside the cells in which the detainees suffer from malnutrition, lack of hygiene, the spread of insects, pollution, and lack of ventilation and lighting.

With the death of Al-Shami and Sobhi, the number of Egyptian detainees who died in the detention centers under the current regime, either by medical negligence, poor conditions of detention or torture, rose to 866, of which 80 died in 2020.

Given the spread of a second wave of the Corona virus, and the emergence of three new strains of the virus, according to the statements of the Egyptian Ministry of Health, the organisation warned of the Egyptian authorities indifference in dealing with the lives of detainees, which is the responsibility of the government according to international laws and treaties, especially in times of epidemics.



Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK
المنظمة العربية لحقوق الإنسان في بريطانيا

AOHR UK called on the international community and the relevant UN bodies to priorities the file of Egyptian detainees and to intervene to save their lives. It warned that their continued detention in these conditions and the ongoing deliberate medical negligence would lead to a real disaster in prisons, as large number of detainees could lose their lives.

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