



Date : 23/07/2022

“National Security is killing me”: a testimony from Egyptian detainee Jihad Selim

“National Security is killing me. I suffer from terrible pains. In a few days I will be dead” — these words are taken from a letter that Egyptian detainee, [Jihad Selim](#), who is suffering from cancer, was able to send to his family from inside Abu Zaabal prison. Selim requires urgent medical intervention, though this has been denied by the prison’s administration.

The 33-year-old detainee, whose full name is Jihad Abdel-Ghani Muhammad Selim, and is a father of two, suffers from [throat cancer](#), which prevents him from eating or drinking. Despite requiring immediate surgery, the prison authorities and wider national security complex are denying his family’s request that he leave the prison for such treatment.

In his letter, Selim wrote: “Do not be sad; I have not committed any crime. I do not deserve to be here, though the security services are killing me. Take care of my children and remember me. I would like to see you and feel your embrace on these painful days. I feel that I am dying. (...) I was seen by a doctor at the Oncology Institute and was told by him I will not live more than ten days without surgical intervention. I do not think that anyone can do anything for me now.”

Selim was arrested and detained in September 2015 in connection with a politicised case against critics of the current regime, soon after, he developed a cancerous tumour on his tongue. His health condition worsened, and – as a result of medical negligence on the part of the administrations of both Zagazig and Abu Zaabal prisons – the tumour spread over his mouth and throat. Selim has generally been deprived of even the minimally necessary medical care.



At one point during his detention, doctors advised that Selim needed urgent surgery. However, the National Security Agency (NSA), which takes responsibility for political detainees, did not respond to their advice as Selim's condition deteriorated. Moreover, since his arrest, Selim has [suffered from both physical and psychological abuse](#) at the hands of security and judicial officials. After his arrest seven years ago, he was subjected to enforced disappearance for 30 days, during which time he was tortured in order to extract a confession for various crimes he insists did not commit. After a long period of pretrial detention, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison, following a highly politicised trial.

The Egyptian prison system is infamous for its inhumane conditions, and Selim is held in the particularly notorious Abu Zaabal prison. Abu Zaabal is remembered for the August 2013 killing of 38 political detainees while held in a bus outside the prison.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK ([AOHR UK](#)) underlines that the Egyptian authorities bear full responsibility for Selim's health and life and argue that what is being done to him is premeditated murder.

AOHR UK calls on all human rights and media institutions, and all journalists, activists, and human rights defenders to raise a call for Selim to be allowed to receive the [medical attention](#) his life depends on.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)