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Crackdown on the “Soumoud Convoy”: Egyptian Authorities Suppress a Noble Popular Initiative in Solidarity with Gaza, Aligning Once Again with the Occupation’s Policies

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK) stated that the Egyptian authorities, at a pivotal humanitarian moment, amid growing popular and international calls to end the genocide faced by the people of Gaza for more than twenty months, have once again chosen to stand on the wrong side of history. Rather than supporting noble popular movements such as the “Steadfastness Convoy”, meaning steadfastness in Arabic, which headed towards the Rafah crossing in solidarity with the Palestinian people, the authorities prevented participants from entering via Cairo Airport, raided hotels in the capital, and arrested activists of various nationalities who had come with purely humanitarian motives to show solidarity with besieged Gaza.

AOHR UK explained that Egyptian security forces detained dozens of activists from Tunisia, Algeria, and France, including lawyers and human rights defenders, at Cairo Airport without food or water for extended periods, confiscated their phones and documents, and denied them access to legal counsel or their diplomatic missions. These actions represent a flagrant violation of international covenants and human rights, and send a clear message to the occupying power that the Egyptian regime remains committed to suppressing any activities that may bother it while it continues committing the most heinous crimes.

AOHR UK added that the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement filled with rhetorical support for Palestinian rights and welcomed public solidarity, but made such solidarity conditional on “respecting organisational procedures,” including obtaining visas and prior approvals. Yet, no official body responded to the visa



applications submitted weeks in advance, indicating that these bureaucratic requirements were used as a pretext to obstruct any genuine acts of solidarity.

AOHR UK pointed out that issuing emotional statements while remaining silent in the face of ongoing genocide, and simultaneously cracking down on or banning grassroots solidarity actions, amounts to direct complicity in the crime, particularly from a neighbouring state that controls one of Gaza's key border crossings. While people are being killed, homes destroyed, communities displaced, and starvation spreads, the Egyptian regime has remained silent, issuing only hollow statements, even allowing goods to flow from Egyptian ports to the occupying power following the imposition of a naval blockade by the Houthis on ships heading to occupied Palestine.

AOHR UK affirmed that the Egyptian regime has been complicit with the occupying government since the earliest days of the war, having closed the Rafah crossing even before it was seized by occupation forces, prevented aid from entering, and blocked any genuine popular solidarity efforts. Egyptian security services have gone as far as to pursue anyone daring to express solidarity including foreigners who entered the country legally.

What happened to the Soumoud Convoy, which included hundreds of activists from the Arab Maghreb and Europe, is yet another scandal in a long list of systematic violations against all who stand with Gaza. Activists were arrested, some deported, others tracked in their hotels, and their freedoms and voices silenced simply for wanting to stand with the besieged people of Gaza.

AOHR UK stressed that it is unacceptable to deny the Egyptian people's role in standing with the Palestinian cause. At a time when protests are ongoing across Western capitals and public pressure continues across Europe and the United States, it is regrettable that prominent Arab countries remain paralysed.

The convoy should have departed in the first month of the genocide, but its launch at this time still holds vital importance in amplifying efforts to stop the massacres, especially amid the rising number of official voices in the West calling for an end to the genocide.



Solidarity with the Palestinian people is not a crime, but rather a moral and humanitarian obligation. The international community must act urgently to pressure the Egyptian authorities to allow activists to reach the Rafah crossing without obstruction. AOHR UK also called for the immediate release of all detainees and for the convoy to be allowed to proceed towards Rafah.

AOHR UK urged all civil, human rights, and trade union bodies across the Arab world, especially within Egypt, to take urgent action and exert pressure to end this repressive approach against those in solidarity with Gaza, and to force the Egyptian authorities to allow protests, enable aid convoys to pass, and halt the persecution of activists. It is time the Egyptian regime heard the voice of the Arab people, not that of the occupation and its pressures.

AOHR UK also issued a special appeal to the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, a figure of immense religious and symbolic significance in the hearts of the Islamic and Arab nations, to raise his voice clearly in defence of Palestinian rights and in rejection of the genocide. He is also called upon to organise convoys towards the Rafah crossing, to send a message to the occupation: Enough killing, enough destruction, and a message to the people of Gaza that they will no longer be left alone.

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK