"Egyptian family values" besiege freedom of expression

Quarterly Report on the State of Freedom of Expression in Egypt
"EGYPTIAN FAMILY VALUES" BESIEGE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.
Quarterly Report on the State of Freedom of Expression in Egypt (July - September 2020)

The report was prepared by Wessam Atta, Director of the Monitoring and Documentation Unit at the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE)

Publisher:
Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression
info@aftegypt.org
www.aftegypt.org
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This report presents and analyzes some issues related to the right to freedom of expression. These issues display the state institutions’ attitude towards the right to freedom of expression and access to information. The report also reviews and analyzes the documented violations in accordance with AFTE’s monitoring and documentation standards. The violations documented in this report took place in the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020.

INTRODUCTION

The third quarterly report is issued at a time when Egypt is witnessing an unprecedented level of suppression of freedom of expression, and the Egyptian authorities are still preventing citizens from exercising their political and civil rights, especially the right to freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly, targeting all means through which opinion can be expressed.

AFTE monitored the increased use of force by the police to prevent protests against various government policies, in conjunction with the outbreak of limited demonstrations against the Building Violations Law, and the call by self-exiled businessman Mohamed Ali for protests on 20 September 2020. Ali had called for demonstrations at the same time last year to protest against the deteriorating living conditions and the practices of some state institutions which he described as “corrupt”. Security forces used force to disperse the September 2020 protests, which led to the killing of two protesters, according to Amnesty International. Security forces also arrested at least 1,800 demonstrators, according to AFTE, despite the fact that the demonstrations were limited.

The Egyptian authorities continue to restrict internet freedom, as they seek to control the flow of information related to violations and public policies that are unfair to citizens’ rights. It seems that political content is not the only source of trouble to the authorities, as the Egyptian government launched a security campaign several months ago targeting a number of internet users, including TikTok influencers, under the pretext of protecting morals, principles and societal values. This campaign continued during the third quarter of 2020.

In its first section, the report reviews the state of freedom of expression, looking at the political context in which violations of freedom of expression have been committed, whether through the attack on peaceful demonstrators, or through the crackdown on human rights defenders. In the second section, the report presents violations of press freedom, digital rights, and freedom of creativity. In its third and final section, the report concludes with several recommendations aimed at protecting the right to freedom of expression and access to information.

FIRST: REVIEW OF THE STATE OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION:

The political context affects the right to freedom of expression, as the more the state institutions seek to tighten their control of power and achieve stability, the more there is a need to restrict human rights, especially freedom of expression, because these institutions adopt a totalitarian approach to governance. By studying the September demonstrations and the ongoing crackdown on human rights defenders, it is possible to understand how politics have affected freedom of expression.

• September protests: Limited demonstrations dispersed by force, hundreds of protesters arrested

In September 2020, limited demonstrations erupted in several governorates, mainly including Cairo, Giza, Alexandria and Minya, to protest against the Building Violations Law. The law, which provides for fines that increased financial burdens on citizens, came as the poverty rate exceeded 32.5%, according to a report issued by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics for the fiscal year 2017/2018².

Mohamed Ali also renewed his call for protests against the policies of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi on the anniversary of his first call for demonstrations on 20 September last year.

Police forces used violence to disperse the protests, which led to the killing of two demonstrators. At least 1,800 people were arrested during the unrest, according to AFTE. Most of them were randomly arrested in the streets that witnessed demonstrations, a repeat of what happened in 2019 when thousands were arrested and detained in Case No. 1338 of 2019 registered with the State Security Prosecution.

In September 2020, security forces deployed in key squares and streets in various governorates, especially in Cairo and Giza, and stopped pedestrians and searched the content of their mobile phones and their social media accounts. This spread fear among citizens and led them to avoid passing by major squares.

Those arrested during the limited demonstrations were referred to the State Security Prosecution, which questioned hundreds of them and decided to detain them in two cases: No. 880 of 2020 and No. 960 of 2020, on charges of joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, using social media accounts for the purpose of committing a crime, inciting assembly, and assaulting public officials.

On 27 September, Public Prosecutor Hamada Al-Sawy decided to release 68 children who were arrested during the demonstrations³. They were among the defendants in Case No. 880 of 2020. A statement issued by the Public Prosecutor said that parents of the released children pledged to protect them, take care of them, and not to allow them to commit such acts in the future or to endanger themselves again. The statement noted that the Public Prosecution would continue investigation with the rest of those arrested during the protests. No further statements or comments on the incidents have been issued by the Public Prosecution.

The Egyptian authorities have restricted the citizens’ right to peaceful assembly since the issuance of the Demonstration Law in 2013, which stipulated prior notification before staging demonstrations. Some opposition parties tried to abide by the law, but the security authorities refused to accept requests for demonstrations.

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² Yasmine Selim, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics reveals that Egypt’s poverty rate increased to 32.5% in 2017, Masrawy, 29 July 2019, last visited on 28 October 2020, https://bit.ly/31NA4d0
³ Public Prosecutor orders the release of 68 children accused of participating in the recent riots, the Egyptian Public Prosecution’s Facebook page, 27 September 2020, last visited on 28 October 2020, https://bit.ly/2Tziv4Q
Human rights defenders: More crackdown and abuse

The Egyptian authorities continue to prosecute and abuse human rights defenders in order to prevent any parties working to monitor rights violations in Egypt, in light of the serious deterioration of the human rights situation in the country under the current president’s rule.

On 25 July 2020, the Fifth Terrorism Circuit Court in Cairo sentenced in absentia the director of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Bahey El-Din Hassan, to 15 years in prison on charges of insulting the judiciary and spreading false news with the aim of harming the country’s economic center and disrupting the provisions of the constitution and law. The case has to do with some tweets and conferences that tackled the human rights situation in Egypt.

Hassan was sentenced to 3 years in prison in September last year on charges of insulting the judiciary based on the same accusations, and the court based its verdict on articles of the Anti-IT Crimes Law No. 175 of 2018.

These were not the only rulings against Hassan, as a court issued a decision on 17 September 2016 to seize his money and the money of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, in Case No. 173 of 2011. Hassan’s name was placed on the arrival watchlist.

In the last week of August 2020, charges were brought against Israa Abdel Fattah, Mohamed Al-Baqer, Amr Imam, and Mahienour El-Masry, in connection with a new case that carried No. 855 of 2020 (registered with the Supreme State Security Prosecution). The four human rights defenders are now held in pretrial detention. The Supreme State Security Prosecution accused them of joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and misusing social media, based on investigation reports submitted by the National Security Agency claiming that individuals from outside the prison were spreading rumors and communicating with the detainees during the time of exercise or during the detention renewal sessions before the prosecution or court. The prosecution referred to these reports at a time when the prison administration prohibited exercise and visits for the detainees for nearly six months.

The imprisonment of Israa Abdel Fattah has been renewed since she was arrested by a National Security force in October 2019 in connection with Case No. 488 of 2019, in which she faces the same charges contained in the aforementioned case. Abdel Fattah has been banned from traveling since January 2015, as per a decision by the Public Prosecutor.

Mohamed Al-Baqer was arrested while he was at the State Security Prosecution headquarters to attend an investigation session for his client, political activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, on 29 September 2019. Al-Baqer was remanded in custody in Case No. 1356 of 2019, on similar charges. The imprisonment of lawyer Amr Imam has been renewed since his arrest in November 2019, pending investigation in Case No. 488 of 2019, on similar charges. Likewise, the imprisonment of lawyer Mahienour El-Masry has been renewed since her arrest in September 2019, in connection with Case No. 488 of 2019, for the same charges.

On 17 September 2020, the State Security Prosecution ordered the imprisonment of lawyer and human rights defender, Sayed Al-Banna, in connection with Case No. 880 of 2020, 25 days after a criminal court issued a decision to release him from detention with precautionary measures. He was detained pending investigation in Case No. 621 of 2018. Nevertheless, the court’s decision was not implemented, as Al-Banna disappeared while completing his release procedures, and only appeared before the prosecution later on.
Similarly, the State Security Prosecution decided on 23 August 2020 to remand human rights defender Mohamed Salah in custody for 15 days pending investigation in Case No. 855 of 2020, after he was released in Case No. 488 of 2019 on 19 July 2020. In the new case, Salah faced the same previous charges, which included joining a terrorist group, and spreading false news. These repressive practices indicate that the Egyptian authorities are increasingly suppressing protests and human rights defenders with the aim of preventing any criticism of the government policies. For this end, the authorities use various tools, including the dispersal of protests by force, the decisions issued by the Supreme State Security Prosecution under the current state of emergency, and the rulings issued by the courts of terrorism.
In this section, the report reviews three issues, namely media freedom, digital rights and freedom of creativity. It presents the violations documented by AFTE and analyzes the patterns of these violations.

• Media freedom: Arrests of journalists continue despite decline in violations

Violations against journalists decreased during the third quarter of this year, as AFTE documented four cases, where two journalists were arrested, an article was prevented from publishing, and levelling fresh accusations against an already detained female journalist in a new case. The decline in violations against journalists does not mean that there has been a change in the policies governing the media and the circulation of information, but this is the result of the accumulated restrictions imposed on journalists and the increased censorship. This led journalists to avoid tackling issues that the authorities may consider unacceptable, for fear of being imprisoned. Moreover, state-owned companies own a large number of media outlets, including television networks, newspapers, websites and radio stations. These media outlets impose restrictions on their employees regarding the content provided and the need to comply with the instructions of the security services.

The third quarter of 2020 also witnessed the arrest of a journalist working for Darb website. Islam Mohamed Ezzat, known as Islam Al-Kalhi, was arrested on 9 September while covering the death of a citizen inside Al-Munib Police Station in Giza. He was referred to the State Security Prosecution the next day in Case No. 855 of 2020, where the prosecution charged him with joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and using a social media account for the purpose of committing a crime. Al-Kalhi worked for a number of Egyptian websites, including Al-Badil, Al-Bedaya, Youm7, Masrawy and Dot Masr. He lastly worked for Darb website which is affiliated with the Socialist Popular Alliance Party. The website, whose editor-in-chief is Khaled Al-Balshi, was blocked by the Egyptian authorities last April, only a month after its launch.

Al-Kalhi was not the only journalist arrested during the third quarter, as police forces arrested Mohamed Essawi, a reporter for Al-Qahira 24 website in Beheira Governorate. The Kom Hamada prosecution released him on 16 August, a day after it decided to remand him in custody for 15 days on charges of spreading false news and joining a terrorist group to achieve its goals by broadcasting content on an Arab satellite TV channel. The case is related to Essawi’s coverage of the sinking of a ferryboat in Beheira.

With regard to detained journalists, the defence team of journalist Solafa Magdy was surprised by her being referred to the State Security Prosecution on 30 August as a defendant in a new case that carried No. 855 of 2020. The prosecution charged her with joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and misusing social media. The accusations were based on investigations conducted by the National Security Agency, which claimed that individuals from outside the prison spread false news and communicated with detainees inside the prison. The investigations also claimed that the communication took place when the detainees were doing their physical exercises and when they attended the detention renewal sessions before the prosecution or court, although the prison administration prohibited exercise and visits for the detainees for nearly six months at the time as part of the Ministry of Interior’s measures to limit the spread of Covid-19 in prisons. Magdy has been in custody since November 2019 in Case No. 488 of 2019 (registered with the Supreme State Security Prosecution).

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4 Shaaban Bilal, reporter of “Cairo 24” website in Beheira Mohamed Essawi remanded, the website calls for his release: He does not work for other places, Cairo 24 website, 15 August 2020, last visited on 28 October 2020, https://bit.ly/3mwGKe5
In a separate context, AFTE documented the banning of an article by former Minister of Supply and Internal Trade Gouda Abdel-Khaleq⁵, in which he criticized the government’s tendency to borrow from abroad to face the repercussions of the spread of Covid-19.

A number of detained journalists were released in the third quarter of 2020. On 27 July, the State Security Prosecution decided to release the editor-in-chief of Masr Al-Arabia website, Adel Sabry, after his pretrial detention period ended. He was detained in connection with Case No. 441 of 2018 (Supreme State Security Prosecution), according to Masr Al-Arabia website⁶.

On 19 August, the State Security Prosecution released photojournalist Islam Gomaa ⁷ after his pretrial detention period ended. He was detained in Case No. 441 of 2018 (Supreme Security Prosecution).

Gomaa was arrested from his home on 29 June 2018 and disappeared for at least 40 days until he appeared at the State Security Prosecution headquarters on 16 August in the same year. He faced accusations including joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and misusing social media.

On 13 July, the State Security Prosecution ordered the release of Hossam al-Din Mustafa, a journalist working for Botolat website. He was detained in Case No. 441 of 2018 (Supreme State Security Prosecution)⁸. He was forcibly disappeared for nearly two weeks, as police forces arrested him on 28 June 2018, but he appeared later at the prosecution office on 16 July in the same year, where he faced charges of joining a group established in violation of the law, spreading false news and misusing social media.

• **Digital rights: Prison sentences in TikTok cases**

AFTE documented 12 incidents that contained 18 violations during the third quarter of 2020. These included the arrest and prosecution of social media users in accordance with the Anti-IT Crimes Law, under the claims of preserving morals and family values, as well as the continued crackdown on political activists and internet users who may express views opposing the government policies. AFTE also documented the issuance of prison sentences for 8 social media users, ranging from 2 to 6 years in prison, as follows:

1. Haneen Hossm, Mawaddah Al-Adham and three others sentenced to two years in prison:
   On 27 July 2020, the Cairo Economic Misdemeanor Court sentenced Haneen Hossm, Mawaddah Al-Adham, director of Likee application in the Middle East Mohamed Abdel-Hamid Zaki, administrator of the database and the live streaming at Likee Mohamed Al-Din Ahmed, and admin of Mawaddah Al-Adham’s page Ahmed Sameh Attia to two years in prison and fined them 300 thousand Egyptian pounds each. The case dates back to 21 April 2020 when a police force arrested a student at Cairo University, Haneen Hossm, for publishing a video calling for the use of Likee in exchange for money. The Public Prosecution charged her with violating family principles and values, human trafficking, using girls in work violating the principles and values of society to obtain money, and exploiting the girls’ poor financial conditions and their need for money.

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⁵ Al Diyar website publishes Dr. Gouda Abdel-Khaleq’s article which has been banned from publishing in Al-Ahram and Al-Masry Al-Youm... “How to face Covid-19 comprehensively and effectively”, Al-Diyar, 8 July 2020, last visited on 29 October 2020, [https://bit.ly/3mqHUG6](https://bit.ly/3mqHUG6)


⁷ Testimony of his lawyer.

⁸ Testimony of his lawyer.

On 11 June, the Public Prosecution referred the five defendants to trial in Case No. 1047 of 2020 (Cairo Economic Misdemeanor Court). The prosecution accused Zaki and Ahmed of helping Hossam to publish the video clip which included a call for immoral meetings, and helping her with the video content. The prosecution also charged Attia with managing Al-Adham’s social media account and assisting her in publishing videos offensive to public decency. Attia was also charged with obtaining programs that were designed without permission from the Communications Regulatory Authority and without legal justification, with the aim of using them to help Al-Adham commit her crime.

2. Manar Sami arrested, sentenced to 3 years in prison:
On 1 July 2020, a police force arrested Manar Sami from a café in Kafr Saad, Qalyubia Governorate, under a lawsuit lodged against her by lawyer Ashraf Farahat. In his lawsuit that carried No. 26712 of 2020, Farahat accused Sami, who was known in local media as the “TikTok girl”, of posting short videos and pictures on Instagram and TikTok that contained sexual innuendo to provoke sexual arousal with the aim of attracting viewers, and collecting money in violation of the customs and traditions in the country.

Sami was arrested along with a young man called Zika. The prosecution accused both of inciting immorality and debauchery and possessing narcotic pills. It remanded them in custody for 4 days pending investigation. On 29 July 2020, the Economic Court in Tanta sentenced Sami to 3 years in prison and fined her 300,000 Egyptian pounds. The court also ruled that she could pay 20,000 Egyptian pounds to have the sentence suspended until it is appealed. The case carried No. 595 of 2020 (Economic misdemeanour). On 19 September, Tanta Economic Misdemeanor Court of Appeal upheld the First Instance Court’s ruling.

3. “Sherry Hanem” and “Zomoroda” sentenced to 6 years in prison:
On 30 September 2020, the Economic Court sentenced Sherifa Refaat, aka Sherry Hanem, and her daughter Nora, aka Zomoroda, to 6 years in prison and fined them 100,000 pounds each on charges of infringing on family values and principles, violating privacy, and posting pictures and videos that contained profanity and sexual innuendo.

The prosecution charged one of them with using social media to solicit prostitution and the other with assisting her, and creating personal accounts on the internet with the aim of committing these crimes.

Both Sherry Hanem and her daughter were arrested from a residential apartment in Heliopolis, Cairo Governorate, on 11 June.

4. Court upholds imprisonment of “Sama Al-Masry”
On 7 September 2020, the Economic Misdemeanor Court of Appeal reduced the sentence issued against “Sama Al-Masry” to two years and fined her 300,000 pounds. On 27 June 2020, Al-Masry was sentenced to 3 years in prison and was fined 300,000 pounds on charges of posting on her social media accounts pictures and videos that would offend public decency, committing indecent and obscene acts publicly, and violating family values.

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10 Asma Aladdin: She has a child and worked as a flight attendant. The full story of Manar Sami, the “TikTok” girl, Masrawy, 2 July 2020, last visited on 28 October 2020, https://bit.ly/3jChGyH
5. Mennatallah Emad remanded in custody:
On 1 July 2020, the Dokki Prosecution remanded Mennatallah Emad, aka Renad Emad, in custody for 4 days pending investigation on charges of posting videos on TikTok that contained sexual innuendo with the aim of soliciting prostitution. Emad was arrested from a café in Dokki.

6. The arrest of Passant Mohamed:
On 10 July 2020, a police force arrested TikTok influencer Passant Mohamed from a café near her home in the Raml district, Alexandria Governorate. The 20-year-old girl was arrested on charges of posting indecent and immoral videos on TikTok. She was released the next day pending investigation.

7. The arrest of Mohamed Al-Galali:
On 27 August 2020, a police force arrested Mohamed Al-Galali, the admin of a Facebook page called "sexology". He was referred to the prosecution on the same day in Case No. 21022 of 2020, where he faced charges of inciting and facilitating debauchery, using a personal social media account to commit and facilitate the first crime, and violating family values and principles. On 13 September, the Tanta Misdemeanor Court released him on bail of 2000 pounds.

The security services are still pursuing internet users because of their opposing and critical views of the government policies. AFTE documented 7 violations, including arrests, recycling of detainees, and prison sentences. These notably included the prison sentence issued against director of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies Bahey El-Din Hassan over some tweets.

Also, a police force arrested journalist Mohamed Mustafa under a complaint submitted by MP and head of the Zamalek Club Mortada Mansour who accused Mustafa of spreading false news. The complaint was lodged after Mustafa wrote on social media to criticize the House of Representatives and its legislative committee for rejecting the Public Prosecutor’s request to lift Mansour's parliamentary immunity against the background of investigations conducted by the Public Prosecution into complaints submitted by the head of Al-Ahly Club against Mansour. On 27 August, the prosecution released Mustafa on bail of 20,000 pounds.

On 25 August, Radwa Mohamed appeared at the State Security Prosecution office as a defendant in a new case that carried No. 855 of 2020 (State Security Prosecution) where she faced charges of joining and financing a terrorist group. She had already been in pretrial detention in Case No. 488 of 2019 (State Security Prosecution) since November 2019, as she criticized President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi in an online video. The investigations conducted by the National Security Service claimed that Radwa participated in meetings inside the prison to recruit new people and passed information to people outside the prison during visits and detention renewal sessions, although visits and court sessions were suspended at the time.

The Egyptian authorities continued using pretrial detention as a means to abuse political opponents. In this context, Gamila Saber Hassan was “recycled” in a new case that carried No. 880 of 2020 (State Security Prosecution) where she faced the same charges she had in Case No. 1739 of 2019 (State Security Prosecution), namely joining a terrorist group, spreading false news, and misusing social media. The Cairo Criminal Court released her on 22 August, but she disappeared while she was finishing the procedures of her release at the Mokattam Police Station. She appeared on 15 September at the prosecution office as a defendant in the new case.

15 Hisham Walid, Alexandria Prosecution releases TikTok girl Passant Mohamed until the videos are examined, 11 July 2020, last visited on 28 October 2020, https://bit.ly/2TvA6Wg
16 Testimony of lawyer Nabih Al-Ganadi
17 Emad Hassanain, Staff member of Al-Ahly TV’s “Malek we Ketaba” show arrested on charges of spreading false news, Cairo 24, 14 August 2020, last visited on 28 October 2020, https://bit.ly/2HFJ8tO
Hassan was arrested in the Sayyida Aisha district in late February last year when she was speaking on the phone about a campaign entitled “You are not alone,” which was launched by opposition journalist Moataz Matar. Police forces stopped her and searched her phone where they found posts related to the campaign.

The Egyptian authorities continued violating digital rights in various forms, either with political motives related to the rejection and prevention of critical views, or social motives related to the protection of morals and family values. These practices add to the fears related to freedom of using the internet in Egypt, as the authorities have not only expanded censorship on the internet, but also blocked at least 550 websites.

• Freedom of creativity: Societal values constrain creative people

When it comes to freedom of creativity, the situation is not much different. The Egyptian authorities are trying not only to suppress any creative work for its critical content, but are also seeking to control the media on which that critical content is presented, in addition to pursuing creative people. The most recent incident in this regard was the announcement by the director of the National Center for Translation about setting up new mechanisms for accepting materials proposed for translation, on top of which was the rejection of any work that conflicts with societal values, morals and norms. This is considered a declaration of guardianship of creative people and readers as well. The new mechanisms, moreover, reject the translation of some works under loose and unspecified claims.

The National Center for Translation’s announcement sparked angry reactions on social media, prompting the Center to issue an explanatory statement in which it demonstrated the concerns over the new mechanisms. It said that setting the condition that any proposed material should not contradict religions, customs and values “came after the Center received proposed books that contained insults against religious symbols and institutions and lacked real thought”. “The Center also received proposed works that promote homosexuality, perversion and atheism,” the Center said, adding that it would never accept putting its name on such pieces of work.

Such decisions come in line with the government policies that aim to restrict thought and eliminate various outlets of expression. The authorities consider difference and multiplicity as enemies that must be confronted for threatening the state.

AFTE documented two cases of violation against creative people. One of them was “recycled” after the State Security Prosecution released him. The report will not mention his name or any details that may reveal his identity, as requested by his lawyer.

On 15 September, a police force raided the Contemporary Image Collective in downtown Cairo and arrested two staff members. One of them was released hours later, while the other - Gilan Hanafi, the head of the photo lab – was referred to the Qasr al-Nil prosecution for investigation on charges of distributing the “Covid Cairo” magazine without obtaining permission from the Supreme Council for Media Regulation. She was released after the investigation ended.

The “Covid Cairo” magazine features a group of anecdotal pictures and topics related to the Covid-19 situation in the country as well as self-isolation. The magazine was a graduation project for a group of students of the Faculty of Applied Arts at the German University.

18 “They should not conflict with societal values and morals” ... the National Center for Translation announces new mechanisms for selecting its works, Masrawy, 15 August 2020, last visited on 29 October 2020, https://bit.ly/3mzq83C
19 Mustafa Taher, the National Center for Translation issues an explanatory statement regarding reactions to the new translation mechanisms, Al-Ahram Gate, 16 August 2020, last visited on 29 October 2020, https://bit.ly/31TuRFs
In this section, the report reviewed violations in various fields. In the next section, it will present recommendations addressed to the concerned bodies with the aim of stopping these violations and ensuring protection of freedom of expression.

**THIRD: RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROTECTION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

At the end of this report, AFTE presents a number of recommendations with the aim of encouraging the concerned bodies locally and internationally to continue dialogue with the Egyptian authorities so they will protect the right to freedom of expression and access to information, as follows:

1. **The public prosecution should release the citizens arrested during the September demonstrations, in connection with Case No. 880 of 2020 and Case No. 960 of 2020 (Supreme State Security Prosecution).**

2. **The Journalists Syndicate should address the concerned authorities, including the Public Prosecution, to release journalist Solafa Magdy who was charged in a new case, and journalist Islam Al-Kahli who was detained during the third quarter of 2020.**

3. **The newly-elected House of Representatives should stop using the Anti-IT Crimes Law, in order to help nullify the prison sentences issued against TikTok influencers.**

4. **The National Center for Translation and all state-owned cultural institutions should guarantee freedom for translators and creative people to select artistic works and present them to the public without censorship.**

**CONCLUSION**

This report addressed the most prominent issues affecting freedom of expression during the third quarter of 2020. Through this report, AFTE aims to encourage efforts to advocate freedom of expression and support journalists, creative people and activists who face constant restrictions on their work and activities.

AFTE urges the concerned entities inside and outside Egypt to use the information contained in this report in their communication with the Egyptian authorities in order to promote and protect freedom of expression.