Public Prosecutor Hamada al-Sawi

 Office of the Public Prosecutor

 Madinat al-Rehab Cairo

 Arab Republic of Egypt

Zürich, 27 August 2020

Dear Counsellor,

**Hoda Abdelmoniem**, a 61-year-old lawyer, has been arbitrarily detained since 1 November 2018 pending investigations into unfounded «terrorism»-related charges. Amnesty International believes she is held solely due to her human rights work. She is held at the al-Qanater Women’s Prison and has been denied a single visit from her family and lawyers since her arrest. Prison officials have not provided them with any reason for denying visits.

On 15 March 2020, Egypt suspended all court proceedings as a measure to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Before the suspension, Hoda Abdelmoniem’s family saw her briefly during a court session on 3 February 2020. Her daughter told Amnesty International that Hoda Abdelmoniem seemed particularly unwell, noting that she had suffered a heart attack on 26 January 2020 leading to her hospitalization. Even though court hearings have resumed on 1 May 2020, Hoda Abdelmoniem has not been transferred to court until 18 July 2020, where her husband was able to speak with her for few minutes.

Hoda Abdelmoniem’s family members were also prevented from receiving any written information on her medical situation adding to their distress. Her daughter told Amnesty International that staff at the hospital, where she was treated for the heart attack, told her that the police took all her medical records. Hoda Abdelmoniem also suffers from high blood pressure and has sustained a clot in her left leg.

As you will be aware, on 10 March 2020, the Egyptian authorities suspended all prison visits citing COVID-19 fears. The Ministry of Interior announced on 15 August 2020 the resumption of prison visits on 22 August, with some restrictions in place. Amnesty International fears that Hoda Abdelmoniem might be excluded from the resumption of visits given the prison authorities’ previous denials. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, prison authorities have not allowed Hoda Adbelmoniem’s relatives to exchange letters with her, while other prisoners held in al-Qanater Women’s Prison were able to send and receive letters.

We urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Hoda Abdelmoniem and drop all charges against her. Pending her release, we also call on you to ensure that Hoda Abdelmoniem has regular access to adequate health care and access to her medical records and that she is allowed immediate access to her family and lawyers.

Yours sincerely,