



The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy



**United Nations Human Rights Council
45th Regular Session
Agenda Item 4**

**Oral Statement delivered by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) in the General
Debate on Item 4**

ATTACKS AGAINST LAWYERS IN EGYPT

25 September 2020

Madame President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy draw the Council's attention to the continuing deterioration of the situation for human rights and the rule of law in Egypt.

Yesterday our organizations published a new report, *Targeting the Last Line of Defense: Egypt's Attacks against Lawyers*,¹ to be followed by a virtual side event on 30 September.

As the last line of defense against the government's sustained and broad crackdown on human rights and fundamental freedoms, Egypt's lawyers have been increasingly and systematically targeted by authorities. Since 2018, at least 35 lawyers have been arrested and arbitrarily detained for their legal defense work and exercise of fundamental freedoms.

Lawyers have been subject to arbitrary arrest and detention, physical assault, torture and other ill-treatment, and enforced disappearances, as well as unfounded and politicized criminal proceedings based on charges under grossly overbroad criminal laws on "terrorism," "spreading false news," and "misusing social media." Arrests of lawyers spiked in the wake of the September 2019 protests. Arrests continue despite the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak in detention facilities.

The ICJ and Tahrir Institute call on Egyptian authorities to end these violations of the rights and role of lawyers, to take measures to protect the independence of the Bar Association, and to amend all relevant legal frameworks in line with Egypt's constitution and international human rights law and standards.

Thank you.

For more information, contact: un@icj.org

¹ <https://www.icj.org/targeting-the-last-line-of-defense-egypts-attacks-against-lawyers/>