

Tons of Oppressions Resulted in PRIDE

“It was an act of support and solidarity.....for everyone who is oppressed¹” *Sarah Hegazy*²

With a sad and heavy heart, **Bedayaa Organization** mourns the loss of the Queer, Egyptian activist, **Sarah Hegazy**. May her soul rest in peace, and we hope that her family, friends, and loved ones will have the strength and fortitude to bear this tragic loss.

In October 2017, Egyptian police forces arrested **Sarah Hegazy** after waving a rainbow flag at Mashrou' Leila concert in New Cairo. Other 75 persons were arrested with Sarah; most were fined on charges of habitual debauchery, incitement to debauchery, and public indecency. Sarah was eventually freed on bail after a three-month of torture, physical, sexual and verbal abuse in prison. In 2018, the persecution and social stigma forced Sarah to leave Egypt and seek asylum in Canada. As a result of this traumatic experience and isolation in exile, Sarah decided to take her life.

Despite the lack of an explicit statute, the Egyptian state criminalizes consensual same-sex relations; courts usually use Law 10/1961 on combating prostitution and debauchery. LGBTIQ persons are frequently subjected to a wide range of violations during the interrogation and investigation phases including torture, sexual and physical assault, coerced anal examination and bullying in detention places.

Egypt's human rights situation in general has significantly deteriorated since 2013 when the SISI's regime came to power; violations including killing, enforced disappearance and torture are committed by the state against human rights defenders and activists to control the civil society movement and prove the national sovereignty.

Dramatically, the recent local and international response of support and solidarity with Sara's loss has given rise to a new wave of hate speech and discrimination in social media platforms without protection from the state.

In such a desperate situation, we do commiserate with our communities in Egypt and all over the world about the difficulties we face, but then fall back on working and advocating for our cause, and agreeing that in the end, ‘**PRIDE rises from oppressions**’. Therefore, we call on our local, regional and international partners and allies to take actions as follows:

1. We urge the human rights organizations and defenders to raise voices about the violations faced by the LGBTIQ community in Egypt, and influence governments to hold the Egyptian state accountable for its violations against HRDs and LGBTIQ and push to; 1) end arrests and prosecutions based on the use of law No. 10 of 1961 against LGBTIQ persons in Egypt, 2) ensure accountability system for detention places and prisons with a clear reporting system for abuses, 3) ban torture, physical and sexual assaults in detention places including coerced anal examinations, 4) ensure well-being and mental health of defendants during prosecution and in detention places, and 5) guarantee proper conditions for Trans individuals in detention places and prisons.
2. We urge funding agencies and organizations to support rehabilitation, wellness and psychological health programs for HRDs and activists who experience violence, arbitrary arrest and torture based on SOGI.
3. We urge LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees' host countries to take into consideration the post-traumatic experiences of survivors when designing their asylum processes and procedures.

¹Said by Sarah Hegazy after her release

²<https://tinyurl.com/yac6q9r6>