

HE Abdel Fattah el-Sisi
President- Arab Republic of Egypt

Letter via email to the Presidency of Egypt and the Embassy of Egypt in Belgium.

Brussels, 23 November 2017

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to you on behalf of 170 journalists' unions representing 600,000 journalists around the world, to express grave concern over the detention of fellow Egyptian photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid, also known as "Shawkan".

We are particularly concerned about our colleague's health, which has steadily deteriorated over the years, in jail. With his chronic anemia and hepatitis C, he needs urgent medical attention.

Shawkan, was arrested in Cairo on August 14th, 2013 during a journalistic assignment and has been behind bars for over four years now. Extraordinarily, two years into his detention, he was charged with multiple accounts including "*damaging national unity*", "*terrorising citizens*" and "*attempted murder of police officers*".

Court proceedings however showed no evidence against him. His colleagues and his employer, who submitted testimonies to support his case, Egyptian journalists and the IFJ are all convinced of his innocence.

Shawkan is not guilty and should have been freed the day of his arrest, as the two international photojournalists arrested with him were.

I therefore urge you Mr. President, to use all the powers at your disposal to ensure Shawkan is freed and reunited with his grieving family as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Philippe Leruth,
IFJ President