

This UN brief on transnational repression doesn't just describe a global pattern — it describes my life.

My name is Basma Mostafa. I'm an Egyptian journalist, human rights defender. Right now I work as Programs Director at the Law and Democracy Support Foundation — a diaspora civil society organization based in Berlin. I was arrested three times for reporting on state violence in Egypt, and in 2020, I was forced to flee. Since then, I have faced transnational repression in Beirut, Nairobi, Berlin, and Geneva.

In July 2022 — just one year after my arrival in Germany — I held my German Press Syndicate card and had registered to attend a press conference for Egypt's president. But I was denied access, in what appeared to be a coordinated action between authorities. I decided to exercise my right to peaceful protest and joined demonstrations against the visit. I planned to read a statement calling for the release of imprisoned journalists in Egypt. Instead, I was surrounded, physically attacked, and harassed by a group of men in front of President Sisi, Chancellor Scholz, and German police officers.

The men had links to Egyptian intelligence. I documented them and filed legal complaints — I did everything in my capacity. I handed over all evidence to the German police: names, photos, and proof of these individuals' connections to the Egyptian regime including the intelligence services. For years, we were told it is difficult to prove that perpetrators of transnational repression are directly linked to a state. In my case, I did prove it. My case is fully documented, recognized by five UN Special Rapporteurs, and even publicly acknowledged by the German government — but that acknowledgment was empty. No one was held accountable.

They keep harassing me — because inaction encourages them. The empty acknowledgments send a message: "You can act with impunity, with our full complicity, because the interests of states are more important than human rights and the rule of law."

This — this trauma — is not secondary damage. It is the method. It is the message. This is what transnational repression looks like. But more importantly — this is what abandonment looks like.

I am part of a global community of exiled journalists, writers, activists, and entire communities — including Tibetans, Uyghurs, and others — who are harassed and threatened, often simply because of who they are or what they represent. Many are left alone, suffering in silence because Member States fail to act, to uphold the rule of law, and to respect their international obligations.

Law and Democracy Support Foundation, have documented Egypt's systematic pattern of transnational repression — a strategy that targets exiles and their families. This includes pressure on family members inside Egypt, crackdowns on protests abroad, the use of the Anti-Terrorism Law as a tool of repression, denial of documents and consular services, defamation campaigns, and proxy repression via regional cooperation. I am not the only Egyptian facing

this. We call on Egypt to stop targeting exiles and to stop using fear as a weapon across borders. End this strategy of silencing and intimidation — inside and outside Egypt.

I also speak today as part of a coalition against transnational repression in Germany. We have built clear recommendations — based on lived experience — and fully aligned with the OHCHR's solutions: holistic protection, trauma-informed responses, robust legal safeguards, accountability for perpetrators, support services for victims, cross-border cooperation, and ending impunity.

I call on all Member States to immediately implement the OHCHR's guidelines on transnational repression — and to turn these recommendations into real, concrete protection measures for exiled defenders and targeted communities.