

GALAL EL-BEHAIRY: EGYPT



Galal El-Beairy is an Egyptian poet and lyricist known for his criticism of the authorities. El-Beairy was arrested in March 2018 at Cairo International Airport on his return from travels abroad. He initially faced charges of ‘joining a terrorist group’, ‘disseminating false news’, and ‘insulting the President’ for lyrics he had written for the song *Balaha*, performed and disseminated online by exiled Egyptian singer Ramy Essam. This case was eventually dropped, but El-Beairy remained in detention, serving a three-year prison term for allegedly ‘disseminating false news and rumours’ and ‘insulting the Egyptian army’ in his unpublished poetry collection, *The Finest Women on Earth*. In July 2021, when his prison sentence expired, El-Beairy was subjected to enforced disappearance for three weeks before being freshly charged with ‘disseminating false news’ and ‘joining a terrorist group’ by the Supreme State Security Prosecution. Along with other detainees, he joined a collective hunger strike for several weeks in February 2022 to protest against their arbitrary detention. Galal El-Beairy’s family has informed PEN International that his health has significantly deteriorated due to his imprisonment, poor prison conditions, and lack of adequate medical care. PEN International calls for his immediate and unconditional release.