

Christian YouTuber Sentenced to 5 Years Hard Labor for Speaking About His Faith

A Christian YouTuber in Egypt has been sentenced to five years of hard labor for defending Christianity online, according to a Washington non-profit.

Aughustinos Samaan will have to complete five years of hard labor after being convicted of “contempt of religion” and “misuse of social media” for content defending Christianity, the Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD) reports.

Samaan has a YouTube channel with 100,000 subscribers and focuses on responding to anti-Christian content widely circulated in Egypt, Coptic Solidarity reports. He is also a researcher who specializes in Christian apologetics and comparative religion.□

Samaan was arrested last October and was initially detained for 15 days pending an investigation.

However, Mariam Wahba, a research analyst with the FDD, points out that the two-week detention quickly evolved into months of imprisonment.



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“By keeping individuals detained and isolated for extended periods, Egypt’s legal system effectively punishes detainees long before a case ever reaches trial,” she recently wrote.

“Under Egyptian law, maximum pretrial detention periods are ostensibly capped at six months for misdemeanors, 18 months for felonies, and 24 months for crimes carrying life

imprisonment or the death penalty. In practice, however, this framework is routinely manipulated to make it nearly impossible for detainees to secure a trial or release,” Wahba explained.

The FDD analyst says prosecutors routinely renew two-week detention sentences for up to five months “under the pretext of ongoing investigations.”

Notably, Egyptian-American Mustafa Kassem was held in pretrial detention for five years under this system before dying in custody in 2020.

Saeed Mostafa, an Egyptian Muslim who converted to Christianity, was arrested weeks before Samaan and remains in custody for charges including “joining a terrorist organization” and “contempt of Islam.”

Additionally, Samaan was sentenced without a fair trial.

“To date, the defense has not been granted access to the case file, nor has it been afforded a genuine opportunity to exercise the right of defense or to represent the defendant before the court. These circumstances raise serious concerns regarding fair-trial guarantees and the fundamental right to defense as enshrined in the Egyptian Constitution and domestic law,” Coptic Solidarity noted in a press release.

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