

## 2022 Ebru Timtik Award Goes to Two Prominent Egyptian Lawyers and Human Rights Defenders

### The Award

The 2022 Ebru Timtik Award has been granted to imprisoned Egyptian lawyers and human rights defenders, Mohamed El Baqer and Haitham Mohammadein.



Mohamed El Baqer



Haitham Mohammadein

Distinguished members of the 2022 Ebru Timtik Award Jury, Ms. Aida Seif El-Dawla, Mr. Gerhard Reissner, Ms. Monica Ruoco, Ms. Suzanne Adely, and Ms. Sebnem Korur Fincanci, delivered the following statement on their deliberations and decision:

The 2022 Ebru Timtik Award Jury considered four nominations that were presented to them. Three of the four nominations were lawyers, all of whom are imprisoned in Egypt. One of the nominations was an organization working on the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.

The Committee deliberated during two online meetings and was faced with the difficult task of choosing among the four honorable candidates, all of whom either have been subjected to grave human rights violations or who are working against those violations, or both. The deliberations were enriched by the opinion of Barkin Timtik, sister of Ebru Timtik, who died in prison after a long hunger strike. Barkin, who herself is being held in a high security prison in Turkey, having been sentenced to 18 years and 9 months, corresponded with the Committee via letters.

The final decision of the Jury was to award this year's award to two individuals, both lawyers and human rights defenders, who, in the eyes of the Committee, were equally engaged in fighting for human rights. Without taking their own risks into consideration, they intervened in many cases to safeguard the human rights of a great number of people, including fighting for the right to a fair trial for their clients and others. Both of the chosen candidates were victims of unfair legal procedures and both of them are currently imprisoned as a result of their work.

The Committee saw no possibility to weigh differently the valiant engagement for justice, freedom and fair trial of each of these men, including the fact that both of them have been victims of unfair trials.

The 2022 Ebru Timtik Award therefore was awarded jointly to both individuals - lawyer and human rights defender, Mohamed El-Baqer, currently serving a four year prison sentence in the Tora high security prison 2 in Cairo, and lawyer, human rights, and workers' defender, Haitham Mohammadein, who has been in and out of prison several times since 2011.

### Mohamed El Baqer

Mohamed El Baqer, founder and leader of Adalah Center for Rights and Freedoms, has a long and renowned history of defending individuals whose rights have been violated and of providing pro bono legal support, including to those detained for exercising their rights to assembly and expression; civilians tried before military courts; and members of marginalized communities, among them religious and ethnic minorities. He has been sentenced to four years by a state security court whose decisions cannot be appealed. The sentence came after spending almost two years in pretrial detention, after he was arrested at the office of the state security prosecution, where he was attending as the lawyer for a prisoner of conscience, Alaa Abdel Fattah, blogger and writer, who also currently is in prison and on a hunger strike. Upon his transfer to prison, El Baqer was subjected to beatings, forced shaving, and abuse by prison officers. During his trial, neither El Baqer nor his lawyers had access to the case file; he was not granted private time to deliberate with his lawyers; and the sentence was ratified by the President shortly thereafter. His four years in prison will start on the date of the sentence, not counting the previous two years he has already spent in prison. He currently is being held in the Tora high security prison 2.

### Haitham Mohammadein

Haitham Mohammadein is a human rights lawyer and trade union activist, who has worked in several human rights organizations and has engaged in several activities helping workers organize their independent unions. Mohammadein was arrested in June 2019 at a police station, while he was meeting with a client there. He was sentenced by the court as a condition of his release from a previous arrest. He disappeared for three days, after which he appeared in front of the state security prosecution and was accused of the usual pretextual charges (including alleged terrorist activities and spreading false news). In 2021, he was acquitted by a court decision, but the following day he was faced with a new case with the same charges, beginning a new cycle of pretrial detention. He is currently being held in Qanater prison for men.

Mohammadein has not yet been brought to trial, despite his prolonged detention, reflecting Egypt's pattern of abuse of the rule of law that is common in Egypt. Similarly, the lack of a fair trial to which El Baqer was subjected is also a common state of affairs in Egypt, as Egypt systemically and systematically denies due process and fair trial to most defendants.

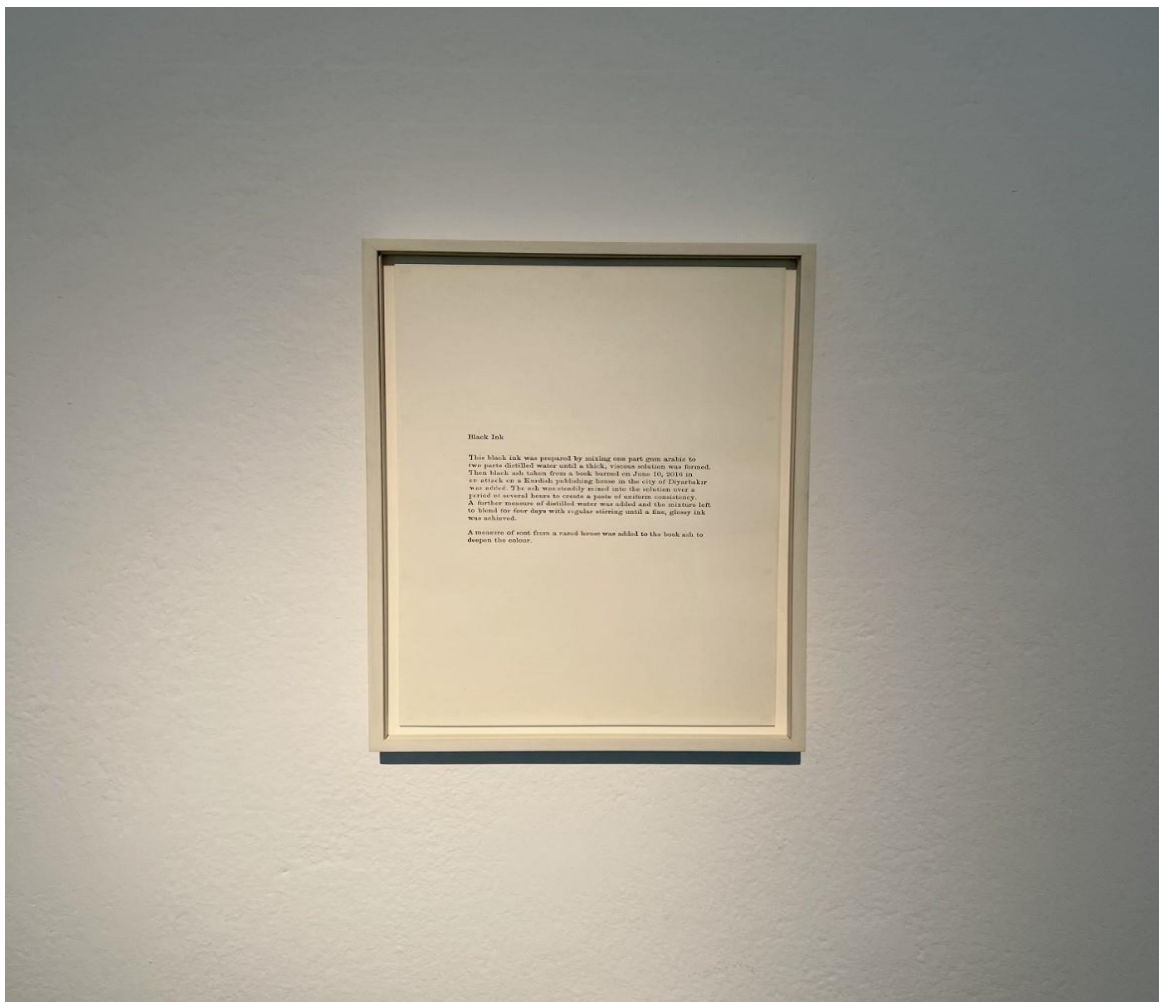
Both laureates have shown great dedication, determination and courage in their work as lawyers and human rights defenders. Through their work, they tried to uphold the rule of law in increasingly difficult circumstances in Egypt.

## Conclusion

By honoring people's lawyers and human rights defenders, Haitham Mohammadein and Mohamed El Baqer, we are also honoring the tens of thousands of political prisoners in Egypt, all of whom either continue to suffer prolonged and harsh detentions. Moreover, if they are allowed to appear in court, the lack of basic fair trial standards results in harsh and severe prison sentences for most, including many committed lawyers and human rights defenders, who remain behind bars.

Granting the award to El Baqer and Mohammadein will focus worldwide attention on their plights and on the plights of innumerable others who remain imprisoned because they sought to defend fair trial or human rights of others.

## **2022 Ebru Timtik Award Artwork by Fatma Bucak, *Black Ink***



# FATMA BUCAK

## ***Black Ink***

Typographic print

31,5x20,5 cm

### Statement:

Typographic print made with ink created from burned book ashes

Created with movable type, *Black Ink* documents the recipe for the ink used to print its letters. The recipe states the tragic events of its origin—ashes from a burned Kurdish book and razed house were added to a solution to create the ink. The Kurdish language has been long-persecuted in Turkey. *Black Ink* bears witness to the burning of a Kurdish publishing house in Diyarbakır, a city in southeast Turkey. Alas, fires have been deliberately incited throughout history to destroy cultural heritage and memory, as is the case for the fire at the center of in *Black Ink*.

Questo inchiostro nero è stato preparato mescolando una parte di gomma arabica e due parti di acqua distillata, fino ad avere una soluzione densa e vischiosa.

Alla miscela così ottenuta è stata aggiunta della cenere nera, quanto rimaneva di un libro bruciato il 10 giugno 2016 in un attentato a una casa editrice curda nella città di Diyarbakir. La cenere è stata aggiunta alla soluzione mescolando costantemente per diverse ore in modo che la pasta ottenuta avesse una consistenza uniforme. Dopo aver aggiunto altra acqua distillata, il composto è stato rimescolato regolarmente per quattro giorni fino a che l'inchiostro non è diventato bello lucido.

Per aumentare l'intensità del colore, alla cenere del libro è stata aggiunta della fuliggine.

#### Black Ink

This black ink was prepared by mixing one part gum arabic to two parts distilled water until a thick, viscous solution was formed. Then black ash taken from a book burned on June 10, 2016 in an attack on a Kurdish publishing house in the city of Diyarbakir was added. The ash was steadily mixed into the solution over a period of several hours to create a paste of uniform consistency. A further measure of distilled water was added and the mixture left to blend for four days with regular stirring until a fine, glossy ink was achieved.

A measure of soot from a razed house was added to the book ash to deepen the colour.

