



## INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ROUNDTABLE

**The Hon Tony Burke MP**  
Minister for Home Affairs  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

26 January, 2026

***Subject: Urgent Appeal for the Release and Protection of Mr. Said Mansour Rezk Abdelrazek***

Dear Minister Burke,

We write on behalf of an international coalition of human rights organizations, religious freedom advocates—including members of the International Religious Freedom (IRF) Roundtable—and independent experts to respectfully urge the Australian Government to take immediate humanitarian and diplomatic action on behalf of **Mr. Said Mansour Rezk Abdelrazek**, an Egyptian national and Christian convert who has been arbitrarily detained in Cairo since **15 July 2025** for exercising his fundamental right to freedom of belief.

The IRF Roundtable is a broad, nonpartisan coalition of civil society organizations and individuals committed to advancing freedom of religion or belief worldwide. We are deeply concerned that Mr. Abdelrazek’s continued imprisonment reflects a persistent and alarming pattern of religious persecution in Egypt, particularly against individuals who convert from Islam.

Mr. Abdelrazek converted to Christianity in 2016 after years of personal reflection. Since that time, he has endured severe and sustained persecution by Egyptian authorities, including repeated arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment, forced divorce, separation from his young son, and continuous surveillance. His experience starkly contradicts **Article 64 of Egypt’s Constitution**, which states that “freedom of belief is absolute,” yet in practice denies that right to those who leave Islam.

In 2018, Mr. Abdelrazek attempted to flee Egypt and seek asylum in Russia. Although initially blocked and mistreated by Egyptian National Security, he eventually reached Russia, where he formally joined the Russian Orthodox Church and applied for asylum. Despite holding documentation from the **UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** confirming that he qualified for international protection, he was deported back to Egypt in 2024 in violation of the

principle of non-refoulement.

Upon his return, Egyptian authorities detained him again, subjected him to abuse, and coerced him into undergoing painful procedures to remove a Christian tattoo. Mr. Abdelrazek later reported that during detention he was suspended for hours at a time in a so-called “crucifixion” position. These acts raise grave concerns under the **Convention Against Torture**, to which Egypt is a party since 1986.

On **15 July 2025**, Mr. Abdelrazek was arrested once more in Cairo’s Matariya district after seeking legal avenues to update his official identity documents to reflect his Christian faith. He was subsequently charged before the State Security Prosecution with serious offenses, including **“joining a terrorist organization.”** The conflation of religious conversion with terrorism represents an extreme and dangerous criminalization of freedom of belief. His lawyers have been denied access to his case files, and he has reportedly been deprived of basic necessities, including medication and clothing.

Mr. Abdelrazek’s case exemplifies Egypt’s failure to uphold both its constitutional commitments and its international obligations under treaties including the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**.

This case bears particular relevance to Australia. Mr. Abdelrazek is engaged to an Australian citizen and resident, who has been seeking his safe release and reunification. We understand that the Australian Department of Home Affairs acknowledged receipt of his **XB (subclass 202) visa application on 8 May 2024**, yet no substantive action has followed. Australia therefore has a clear humanitarian interest and a meaningful opportunity to intervene.

In light of the above, the IRF Roundtable respectfully urges the Australian Government to:

1. **Grant Mr. Abdelrazek humanitarian or protection status**, enabling his safe relocation and reunification with his fiancée in Australia;
2. **Press Egyptian authorities**, through bilateral diplomatic channels, to immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Said Mansour Rezk Abdelrazek; and
3. **Raise his case at relevant international forums**, including the United Nations, emphasizing Egypt’s obligations under international human rights law.

Australia has long been recognized as a principled defender of human rights and a refuge for individuals fleeing religious persecution. Decisive action in this case would reaffirm that commitment and send a clear message that freedom of belief must be real, universal, and protected.

We thank you for your attention to this urgent and deeply troubling matter and stand ready to provide any additional information that may assist the Government in its consideration.

Respectfully,

ORGANIZATIONS (22)

AMERICAN MUSLIM AND MULTIFAITH WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL  
ASSYRIAN INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL  
CAIRO INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES  
CANBERRA DECLARATION  
CHRISTIAN EMERGENCY ALLIANCE  
CHRISTIAN FREEDOM INTERNATIONAL  
CHURCH OF SCIENTOLOGY NATIONAL AFFAIRS OFFICE  
COPTIC SOLIDARITY  
GLOBAL WOMEN CHRISTIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EMBASSY  
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONCERN  
JUBILEE CAMPAIGN  
MUSLIMS FOR PROGRESSIVE VALUES  
PATH OF YAHRA INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUAL SOCIETY  
SET MY PEOPLE FREE  
COORDINATION DES ASSOCIATIONS ET DES PARTICULIERS POUR LA LIBERTÉ DE CONSCIENCE  
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF HUMAN RIGHTS  
IRAQI CHRISTIAN RELIEF COUNCIL  
PRAYER PIONEERS  
JIMENA: JEWS INDIGENOUS TO THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA  
FREEDOM HOUSE  
CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY INTERNATIONAL

INDIVIDUALS (20)

Fazal-ur Rehman Afridi  
President  
Institut de recherche et d'études stratégiques de Khyber (IRESK)

David Alton  
Professor, Lord Alton of Liverpool  
Independent Crossbench Member of the House of Lords  
United Kingdom

Dr. Jamil Ammar  
Professor of Law, Head of Business Programs - triOS/Eastern College

Nahren Anweya  
President - Department of Humanity

Dogan Bermek  
President  
Alawi Philosophy Center Association  
Turkey

Sam Brownback  
Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom, 2018-2021  
Co-Chair, IRF Summit

Lauren Homer  
President  
Law and Liberty Trust

Dede Laugesen  
President  
Save the Persecuted Christians

Kurt Mahlburg  
Senior Editor; Programs Director  
The Daily Declaration; Canberra Declaration

Scott Morgan  
Co-Chair of the Africa Working Group  
International Religious Freedom Roundtable

Eva Miskelova  
Path of YahRa International Spiritual Society

Heidi Nicholl  
Associate Professor and President  
The Humanist Society of Victoria

Patrice J. Pederson  
President  
First Freedom Foundation

Nina Shea  
Director  
Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom

Dr. Massimo Introvigne  
CESNUR  
Torino, Italy

Archbishop Prof. Dr. Thomas Paul Schirrmacher

Juliana Taimoorazy  
Founder & President  
Iraqi Christian Relief Council

Frank Wolf  
Member U.S. Congress (Virginia),  
1981- 2015, retired

Ambassador (ret.) Alberto M. Fernandez,  
Washington DC

Uzay Bulut,  
Journalist