

RAMY SHAATH RELEASED, LOSES EGYPTIAN NATIONALITY

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Ramy Shaath, Egyptian-Palestinian activist, was released on the 6th of January after 900 days in prison. Shaath was very critical towards the Israeli occupation, calling for a boycott to protest against Tel Aviv's settlements in Palestine. His arbitrary detention was renewed 23 times without any investigations or proof. ACHRS condemns the use of arbitrary detention as a deterrent to freedom of expression and activism.

Ramy Shaath took part in the 2011 Egyptian Revolution that led to the overthrow of former Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The activist was later responsible for the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement in Egypt. BDS promotes an academic, cultural, economic and political boycott of the Israeli occupation in solidarity with Palestinians. He was accused of terrorism, and all of his property was confiscated. His detention was perceived as a gesture of cooperation with the Israeli government. Indeed, Shaath was arrested in Cairo in July 2019, just a few days after he criticized Egypt's participation in the Manama Conference that unveiled the economic part of the Trump peace plan, a proposal to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but largely in favour of the Israeli occupation and without any consultation with Palestinians.

Other activists have been liberated recently as well. Ramy Kamel, another Egyptian political prisoner, was released in January 2022. He spent two years in prison for having campaigned for the end of discrimination against the Copt religious minority. Patrick Zaki and Sanaa Seif, two human rights defenders, have also been released recently. However, it should not be forgotten that many other political prisoners remain detained in Egypt. According to Amnesty International, around 60,000 political prisoners are currently detained in the Arab Republic, counting for half of Egypt's incarcerated population. One of them is Alaa Abel Fattah, an important figure of the 2011 Revolution. He was condemned in December 2021 to five years of imprisonment for "spreading false news."

Egypt has signed and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in which article 9 prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention. Therefore, Cairo does not respect its international commitments. Arbitrary detentions are used in Egypt against activists, political opponents and religious minorities to establish a climate of fear and remove all opposition.

ACHRS is delighted to hear that Ramy Shaath was released and could be reunited with his family after two and a half years in detention. However, we condemn the conditions surrounding

his liberation. No one should be forced to leave his country and abandon his nationality in exchange for their freedom. ACHRS urges Egypt to release all its political prisoners. We also call on the European Union and on French President Macron, who took the presidency of the EU in January 2022, to put pressure on Egyptian President al-Sissi to give up on arbitrarily detentions of human rights activists.