

URGENT ACTION

CRITIC RELEASED AFTER SERVING HIS SENTENCE

Egyptian publisher, writer and opposition politician Hisham Kassem was released on 21 February 2024, after completing his full six-month prison sentence. He was arbitrarily detained on defamation and other politically motivated charges brought against him solely for the exercise of his right to freedom of expression, including for publicly criticising a former government minister.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

Critic and Egyptian publisher Hisham Kassem was released on 21 February 2024, after completing a six-month prison sentence, stemming solely from the exercise of his right to freedom of expression. He was detained on 20 August 2023 and later sentenced to six months in prison, following a complaint of defamation lodged by a former minister.

Hisham Kassem left Egypt to avoid re-arrest after receiving a summons to appear in court on 10 February in connection with a separate defamation case by another former minister, where a court later convicted him on 14 May 2025, and sentenced him in absentia to another six-month prison term and a 20,000 Egyptian pound (about 400 USD) fine. Hisham Kassem is also facing another case over defamation accusations by three policemen.

Supporters around the world campaigned for Hisham Kassem's release by sending letters to the Egyptian authorities. Following his release, he conveyed this message to Amnesty International members and supporters:

"Speaking out to expose oppression is a duty. Staying silent in the face of injustice is a form of complicity. I am 65 years old, and for 35 years I have been standing up against the regime. I hold deep respect and admiration for the work Amnesty International does in defending human rights worldwide. Thank you for your solidarity."

Amnesty International will continue to campaign for the release of those arbitrarily detained in Egypt.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Hisham Kassem (he/him).

THIS IS THE SECOND AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 89/23.

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde12/7201/2023/en/>.

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