

URGENT ACTION

POLITICAL ACTIVIST ARBITRARILY DETAINED

On 5 July 2019, Egyptian security forces arrested Ramy Shaath, transferred him to an undisclosed location and concealed his whereabouts for about 36 hours. He then appeared before a prosecutor at the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) in New Cairo and was accused of “aiding a terrorist group in achieving its goals”. His detention was renewed on 15 September 2019 for another 15 days. Amnesty International considers Ramy Shaath to be a prisoner of conscience, as his detention stems solely from the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and his right to participate in public affairs.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

*Public Prosecutor Nabil Sadek
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Madinat al-Rehab
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +202 2577 4716*

Dear Counsellor,

*On 5 July 2019 at approximately 12:45 am, at least a dozen of heavily armed police officers stormed the house of political activist **Ramy Shaath** in Cairo, without identifying themselves or presenting an arrest warrant. Police officers searched his house and seized computers, hard drives and mobile phones. They arrested both Ramy Shaath and his wife Céline Lebrun Shaath, a history teacher and community organizer, who was subsequently unlawfully deported to France on the same day, despite legally residing in Egypt since March 2012.*

Security forces transferred Ramy Shaath to an undisclosed location and concealed his whereabouts for about 36 hours. Police officers in the Qasr el-Nil police station, in Downtown Cairo, denied to Ramy’s family and lawyer that he was in their custody. The family was later informed by a lawyer that Ramy Shaath appeared before a prosecutor at the Supreme State Security Prosecution (SSSP) in New Cairo. Ramy Shaath was not allowed to call his family or legal counsel and was represented during the interrogation session by a lawyer who happened to be present in the court building at the time.

According to the family, the prosecutor informed Ramy that he is accused of “aiding a terrorist group in achieving its goals”. However, he only questioned Ramy about the nature of his political activities in Egypt and did not provide any evidence against him. The prosecutor based his accusation on a secret file gathered by the National Security Agency (NSA), despite a 2015 decision by one of Egypt’s top courts, the Court of Cassation, which ruled that NSA investigations do not constitute evidence on their own. Further, the prosecutor has not allowed Ramy or his lawyers to examine the NSA investigation file.

I therefore ask you to immediately and unconditionally release Ramy Shaath as he is a prisoner of conscience, and his detention stems solely from the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and his right to participate in public affairs. I call on you to also ensure that - pending his release – he must be granted access to his lawyers and his detention must be in line with the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. Finally, I call on the Egyptian authorities to investigate the denial of consular assistance to Ramy Shaath’s wife, Céline Lebrun Shaath, a French national, and her subsequent unlawful expulsion from Egypt, and to provide effective remedies.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ramy Shaath is currently detained in Tora prison in southern Cairo pending investigations as part of a case known as “Hope cell”, which involves at least 105 individuals, many of whom are also detained. According to the authorities, the investigations in the case relate to a “plot by civil activists in cooperation with the Muslim Brotherhood to undermine the state”. The case includes people from across the political spectrum, who are not connected to one another. Amongst them are at least 15 politicians, students, journalists and labour rights activists who are arbitrarily detained over unfounded charges that relate to their legitimate political activities, human rights work, and the peaceful expression of their opinions.

On 6 July, the prosecutor ordered Ramy Shaath’s detention for 15 days pending investigations and has been renewing it every 15 days since then in automatic renewal hearings. Under Egypt’s Code of Criminal procedures and the 2015 counter-terrorism law, prosecutors can issue pre-trial detention orders against individuals accused in “terrorism-related” cases for up to 150 days, without referring them to a judge.

Ramy Shaath is a political activist, who has played an instrumental role in co-founding several secular political movements in Egypt, including El-Dostour party, a political party founded by Mohammad ElBaradei in 2012. He is also the co-founder of the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement in Egypt and has been its Egypt coordinator since 2015. The BDS movement campaigns to hold Israel accountable for human rights and other international law violations, using non-violent means. As part of his activism, Ramy raises public awareness about Palestinians’ rights and has been vocal in the media in denouncing the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. Prior to his arrest, he had participated in public events and gave media interviews in which he expressed his strong opposition to the US plan to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, known as the “deal of the century”, and against Egypt’s participation in the Manama meeting on 25-26 June 2019 aimed at discussing the plan.

The Egyptian authorities have been harassing Ramy for years because of his political activism. In April 2012, the Ministry of Interior refused to renew his Egyptian passport in an attempt to deny him his Egyptian nationality. Although he won a case in 2013 before the Cairo Administrative Court, the Ministry of Interior appealed the verdict in 2018; the appeal is still pending.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English and Arabic

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 29 October 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ramy Shaath (he/him)