



[Activist Ramy Shaath Details the Disturbing Levels of Torture and Arbitrary Detention Under the El-Sisi Regime in Egypt](#)

Egyptian-Palestinian activist Ramy Shaath has recently detailed the disturbing levels of torture and human rights violations he witnessed during his imprisonment under the El-Sisi regime. Shaath was detained by Egyptian authorities despite no formal charges being levied against him. Rights advocates, and Shaath himself, believe that he was arrested for his criticism of Israeli human rights abuses and his role as the coordinator of Egypt's chapter of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. He has also stated that his opposition to a rapprochement between Israel and Arab nations due to the unjust conditions brokered by the previous Trump administration appear to have been the final trigger for his prolonged detainment. Shaath was released last month, having to give up his Egyptian nationality as a condition of him being freed, and is currently residing in France. He has recounted his time in prison, describing the abusive methods used by authorities to attain information whereby detainees were commonly forced to give up any names that could lead to more arrests, no matter how flimsy the basis. Shaath echoed the sentiment put forth by other activists regarding how the state of human rights in Egypt is even worse now than it was under former dictator Hosni Mubarak.

Shaath has spoken about the prevalence of torture and arbitrary detainment by El-Sisi government authorities, and outlined that security forces would often interrogate prisoners using brutal methods of torture and abuse. He himself was kept in a small cell that was crammed with dozens of others. Shaath also noticed a large influx of prisoners who were not heavily involved in politics as some were merely imprisoned for "liking" the wrong post on social media. During the course of the interrogations that he was subjected to, it was clear that the goal was to simply punish him for being an activist. As such, there is widespread fear of arbitrary detention and torture among this segment of the population. It is also common that when people are tortured, they give up friends who have nothing to do with politics because they fear the potential reprisal if they give up friends who are involved. The security forces check these people, who they see are not involved in activism, but still sometimes arrest and jail them regardless. Shaath called on the West to do more, saying that they have leverage over El-Sisi, who is a regional ally of the United States.

This is not the first time that Egyptian authorities have been accused of torture under the El-Sisi regime. There have been widespread reports that there are tens of thousands of political prisoners in jail, all of which El-Sisi has denied. His supporters claim that these arrests are necessary to maintain order in the wake of the unrest caused by the fall of despot Hosni Mubarak. The types of torture that have been detailed include beatings, electric shock, and even instances of sexual assault. There are also many other examples of Egyptian authorities committing crimes against humanity, including assaulting human rights lawyers and jailing citizens for having family members engage in acts that are deemed "anti-government." Additionally, The Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights is an organization that has been targeted by authorities with harassment and arrests.

Shaath has been involved in activism for much of his adult life. He helped found the Egyptian chapter of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement. The BDS movement calls for the boycotting of Israel until apartheid against Palestinians ceases. Shaath remains hopeful about the situation in Egypt, saying that the desire for change is still present in the country. In the preceding years, many people did not talk about what happened during the Arab Spring out of fear, but this year he is seeing more citizens show pride in the role they played and even commemorate it.