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## **EU's co-chairing counterterrorism forum with Egypt risks pardoning human rights abuses**

Arab Organisation for Human Rights the UK ([AOHR UK](https://www.aohr.org.uk)) condemns the European Union's (EU) joint bid with Egypt to chair this year's Global Counterterrorism Forum, to be held in March. Such a partnership suggests the EU's disregard for – and even acceptance of – the Egyptian regime's numerous and ongoing human rights violations.

On 11 January of this year, the EU's Political and Security Committee approved a [proposal](#), presented at October and November 2021 meetings, to submit a joint EU-Egypt application to chair this year's Global Counterterrorism Forum, at which international anti-terrorism policy is formulated. The committee lauded Egypt's "mature" approach towards terrorism.

This [approval](#) was made despite numerous international human-rights organisations have shown the extent of abuse of regime critics in President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's Egypt – abuse often justified as "fighting terrorism". Accusations of "terrorism" have been levelled at numerous activists, political currents, and even foreign journalists.

As the AOHR UK has previously reported on, numerous regime opponents have been arrested for merely expressing political opinions, thousands of whom continue to suffer detention without trial, typically appalling conditions. Thousands more have been convicted after unfair trials, with penalties amounting to life imprisonment, while some others were sentenced to [death](#), 90 of them were already executed.

Egyptian rights activist [Ramy Shaath](#) is a vital example of the Egyptian regime's crackdown on peaceful activism in the country. He was recently appeared before the European Parliament after being freed from more than 900 days of detention after he



was forced to renounce his Egyptian nationality. Shaath briefed the European Parliament of the plight he was subjected to along with thousands of political prisoners in Egyptian custody.

Egypt's nomination to jointly chair such a forum appears almost like an award for its "combating terrorism", even if the regime's methods have amounted to crimes against humanity, as in the case of its brutal campaigning in the [North Sinai governorate](#).

AHOR UK underlines that Egypt's international allies play a key role in the current leadership's apparent impunity. It is not simply that the regime's systematic violations against opponents are ignored – Egypt receives a huge amount of military aid from the Western powers, and enjoys close diplomatic relationships with many of them.

Moreover, the application to co-chair the Forum stands in stark contradiction to the EU's stated principles, all more glaring after various EU bodies and representatives of member states have condemned the worsening human rights situation in Egypt.

AOHR UK calls on the European Parliament to remain true to its founding principles and governing laws and pressure the relevant EU bodies to withdraw the application to joint-chair the Forum, and to initiate serious efforts to save the lives of the tens of thousands of people currently facing a slow death – in the name of "fighting terrorism" – in [Egyptian prisons](#).

Arab Organisation for Human Rights in the UK (AOHR UK)