

**PRESS RELEASE: Open letter to Mrs Merkel regarding Sisi's forthcoming visit**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, May 19, 2015  
Press release

**Open letter to Mrs Merkel regarding Sisi's forthcoming visit**

H.E The Chancellor of The Federal Republic of Germany, Mrs Merkel,

On behalf of the Egyptian Revolutionary Council (ERC), I am writing to you today to ask you to support the aspirations of Egyptian people for a civil democratic state, the rule of law and freedom from tyranny, injustice and oppression. We request that Germany would reconsider its invitation to Mr AbdelFattah El-Sisi, the President of Egypt to visit Germany as has been scheduled for June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015.

The ERC is an organization that brings together Egyptian citizens and movements abroad, irrespective of their political or ideological affiliations. We share in common a belief in the principles of the January 25th Revolution and oppose all aspects of corruption and dictatorship in Egypt. We oppose the military coup and all that ensued from it, and we refuse the interference of the military in political life. We believe in constitutional legitimacy and work for the establishment of a civil state that reflects the will of the Egyptian people and their freedom in choosing their government

We start by setting down the incontrovertible facts:

- President Morsi was the first president to be elected by the only free and fair election in Egypt's history.
- The Freedom and Justice Party, to which President Morsi is affiliated, was elected as the majority party in free and fair elections.
- During his short period in power, President Morsi was thwarted by the military, the judiciary and the oligarchs, yet he safeguarded freedom of press and freedom of expression.
- He was forced out of power by Egypt's armed forces on the 3rd of July, 2013.
- Currently, 40,000 Egyptians are imprisoned for dissent, and thousands of peaceful protestors have been killed since the military coup of 3rd July, 2013. Torture and rape crimes committed by the current authorities against those opposing the coup regime are regularly reported.
- In Egypt today, under General Abdul-Fattah El-Sisi, freedom of assembly is illegal and freedom of expression is strictly restricted.

We are extremely alarmed and dismayed that from July 2013 up till now, 1541 Egyptian men and women have received death sentences in grossly unfair trials; the latest was that of the ousted President Mr Mohammed Morsi and a 100 of his aids and supporters. These trials were described by Amnesty as “charade trials”<sup>1</sup> and by Human Rights watch as “badly flawed, compromised by due process violations, the appearance of bias and an absence of conclusive evidence”<sup>2</sup>. Death sentences have been confirmed and finally ratified for 570 people, seven of whom have already been executed to date. The latest case known as “Arab Sharkas” has received special media attention due to the compelling evidence of innocence at least 3 of those executed<sup>3</sup>.

It has been the longstanding policy of Germany to oppose the death penalty in all circumstances as a matter of principle and to work towards its abolition, its restriction and at least ensuring that minimum EU standards are met in countries which continue to apply this form of punishment. Indeed, EU Policy towards Third Countries on the Death Penalty (EU guidelines) define the campaign against the death penalty as a central human rights issue within the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and sets out principles and criteria for practical action to prevent the imposition of the death penalty in individual cases, as well as to influence the practice in individual countries.

Article 1 of Germany’s Basic Law describes human rights as the basis of every community, of peace and of justice in the world. This means that Germany has an obligation to respect human dignity and protect fundamental freedoms not only in Germany but throughout the world. We therefore believe, the scheduled state visit for Mr El-Sisi would be counter-intuitive and not in line with the German Government’s key priority: **to prevent human rights abuses and protect fundamental freedoms.**

Many political analysts share our view that Mr El-Sisi and his authoritarian government (and politicized judiciary) consider political opposition a threat to national security and a cancer that must be exterminated in order to coerce the majority into submission. We request that General Sisi’s visit is cancelled in order to send a clear message that Germany does not acquiesce to General Sisi’s politics of elimination, and will not abrogate its moral duty to support human rights and democratic systems of government. We believe that inviting and receiving General Sisi is politically counterproductive and plays into the narrative of those who claim that world governments prefer that the Middle East remains governed by autocracies, with no regard for the rights of citizens in that part of the world. Ignoring the rights and aspirations of millions will create greater frustration and anger and the risk of increasing radicalisation and violence.

Germany knows all too well the dangers of authoritarianism and fascism, it should not be welcoming General Sisi whose authoritarian regime and fascist ideology threaten the citizens of Egypt today.

Sincerely,

Maha Azzam  
Head | Egyptian Revolutionary Council

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/press-releases/2015/05/egypt-court-recommends-death-sentences-for-morsi-more-than-100-others/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/25/egypt-morsy-trial-badly-flawed>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/04/egypt-halt-executions-six-men>

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Note to Editors:

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