

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/egypt-reporter-freed-after-10-months-in-17-06-2014,46458.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Egypt

Relief

Reporter freed after 10 months in prison, 140 days on hunger strike

17 June 2014

Reporters Without Borders is relieved to learn that Abdullah Al-Shami, an Al-Jazeera correspondent held without formal charge since August 2013, was freed today. He had been on hunger strike for the past 140 days.

Prosecutor-general Hisham Baraket approved the [release](#) of **Abdullah Al-Shami** and 12 other detainees on health grounds.

Shami was [arrested while covering a demonstration](#) in Cairo's Rabiaa Al-Adawiya Square on 14 August 2013 by supporters of Mohamed Morsi, the Moslem Brotherhood president deposed on 3 July. [According to Human Rights Watch](#), 377 people were killed when the security forces used force to disperse the protest.

Shami lost 40 kg in weight and suffered a significant decline in health as a result of the hunger strike he began on 21 January in protest against his arbitrary detention. On 13 May, RWB [voiced deep concern](#) about his [condition](#) and called for his immediate and unconditional release so that he could receive appropriate treatment.

"We are very relieved by Shami's release after 10 months in detention," said Virginie Dangles, deputy head of research and advocacy at Reporters Without Borders. *"Many journalists are still detained in Egypt including three Al-Jazeera journalists who were arrested in December. We reiterate our call to the Egyptian government to end the travesty of justice surrounding their trial."*

The three other detained *Al-Jazeera* journalists – Cairo bureau chief **Mohamed Adel Fahmy**, who has Egyptian and Canadian dual nationality, reporter **Peter Greste**, an Australian who used to work for the *BBC*, and **Baher Mohamed**, an Egyptian employee – [have been held](#) since 29 December.

Their trial began in February. In all, 20 journalists are being tried jointly. They consist of 16 Egyptians, who are accused of belonging to a "*terrorist organization*" (the Moslem Brotherhood), and four foreigners – two Britons, an Australian and a Dutchman – who are accused of "*supplying money, equipment and information*" in order to "*spread false reports and create the illusion of a civil war in Egypt*".

Eight of them are in detention while the other 12 are being tried in absentia. On 16 June, the judge announced that a verdict would be issued on 23 June. The prosecutor-general has requested long jail terms, ranging from 15 to 20 years.

In a recent [open letter](#), Reporters Without Borders urged President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi to act as a guarantor of freedom of the media and information and to release all detained journalists.

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