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Egypt: Leftist Activist Mahinour El-Masry Freed after 125 Days in Jail

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Egyptian Leftist Activist Mahinour El-Masry Freed after Spending 125 Days in Jail

After spending 125 days in prison, leftist Egyptian activist Mahinour El-Masry was ordered to be released from prison today.

An Alexandria court suspended El-Masry's six-month sentence, reports Mada Masr. In May, the activist was jailed after an appeals court sentenced her for two years, along with eight other activists, for breaking Egypt's controversial protests law, which bans protests in the country. Mahinour was arrested for protesting outside a court in December in which two policemen accused of murdering Khaled Saeed were being tried. Saeed is considered the Mohamed Bouazizi of the Egyptian revolution.

In July, Mahinour's sentence was slashed to six months, and more good news followed today when the Misdemeanors Court threw out the case altogether.

Mahinour started a hunger strike on August 25 in solidarity with fellow Egyptian activist and blogger Alaa Abd ElFattah, who was subsequently released on September 15, 2014, and other political detainees.

Netizens welcomed news of Mahinour's release.

In a part of the world where good news is hard to come by, prolific Egyptian blogger Zeinobia describes her release as "the good news of the day".

Yasmine Khalifa shares similar sentiments:

Amidst the crappy news of multiple explosions across Egypt there is a glimmer of happy news that Mahinour will be released.

But fellow activist Mona Seif knows what would upset Mahinour. She tweets:

Mahinour will be released but she will be upset that those with her in the same case are still detained, especially Islam, who wasn't even taking part in the protest. Freedom for Islam, Omar, Luay and Nasser.

While in prison, Mahinour won the 2014 Ludovic Trarieux International Human Rights Prize, the annual award given by lawyers to a lawyer for their defense of human rights. Incidentally, the first recipient of the the award in 1985 was South African leader Nelson Mandela while he was in prison.

Lawyer Gamal Eid said he believed her release was part of a government maneuver to improve its image. He tweets:

After congratulating Mahinour, I believe that her release from prison is a political ploy by an

oppressive regime. Mahinour will receive an international award next month. And it is to improve the [country's] image before the president travels abroad

Egyptian president Abdel Fattah El Sisi is travelling to the US today to take part in the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York.

But this isn't the end of the road for Mahinour with the Egyptian judicial system. She is still on trial in the Raml police station case, where she is accused with 12 other defendants of damaging the police station and injuring policemen.

Amira Al Hussaini

P.S.

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<http://globalvoicesonline.org/2014/09/21/egyptian-leftist-activist-mahinour-el-masry-freed-after-spending-125-days-in-jail/>