

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. CON. RES. 82

Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the arrest of Ayman Nour, the leader of the al-Ghad party, by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the support of Congress for continued progress toward democracy in Egypt.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 3, 2005

Mr. SCHIFF (for himself, Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN, Mr. ACKERMAN, and Mr. BERMAN) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the grave concern of Congress regarding the arrest of Ayman Nour, the leader of the al-Ghad party, by the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt and the support of Congress for continued progress toward democracy in Egypt.

Whereas the promotion of democracy, freedom, and liberty is central to United States national security policy;

Whereas according to the 1999 World Values Poll, 98 percent of Egyptians support democracy as the best form of government;

Whereas the suppression of political activity throughout the Arab world has strengthened Islamic extremists;

Whereas the Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2003 states that "[Egyptian] citizens did not have the meaningful right to change their government" and that "[the] ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) dominated the 454-seat People's Assembly, the 264-seat Shura Council, local governments, the mass media, labor, and the large public sector, and controlled the licensing of new political parties, newspapers and private organizations";

Whereas new political parties in the Arab Republic of Egypt must be approved by the Political Parties Committee of Egypt;

Whereas in November 2004 the Political Parties Committee approved the formation of the al-Ghad party;

Whereas the al-Ghad party advocates greater transparency, democracy and freedom for Egypt's 73,000,000 citizens;

Whereas Ayman Nour has been a member of the People's Assembly of Egypt for 10 years;

Whereas on November 6, 2004, Ayman Nour was elected as president of the al-Ghad party;

Whereas on December 21, 2004, the first meeting of the Supreme Council of the al-Ghad party was held in Cairo;

Whereas the Government of Egypt accused Ayman Nour of furnishing forged signatures in support of the application of the al-Ghad party to the Political Parties Committee;

Whereas Ayman Nour denied the accusation of the Government of Egypt in a speech to the People's Assembly of Egypt;

Whereas on January 29, 2005, Ayman Nour's immunity from arrest as a member of the People's Assembly was lifted

during a meeting of the Legislative and Constitutional Affairs Committee of the People's Assembly;

Whereas on January 29, 2005, Ayman Nour was arrested by the Government of Egypt and ordered held for up to 4 days, which was subsequently increased to 45 days;

Whereas Ayman Nour remains in custody in a cell with 80 other prisoners;

Whereas Ayman Nour has diabetes and has other health problems and his wife has filed multiple petitions asking that he be transferred to a hospital;

Whereas on January 31, 2005, Richard Boucher, Spokesman for the Department of State, said: "We are concerned by the signal that the arrest sends. [Ayman Nour] is one of Egypt's most prominent opposition leaders and the arrest . . . raises questions about the outlook for democratic process in Egypt. . . . We're on the eve of a long-planned national dialogue between opposition parties, including Nour's and the ruling National Democratic Party. That is a dialogue that we feel is very valuable and we would—we find this arrest at this moment incongruous with proceeding with that dialogue.";

Whereas on February 8, 2005, Mousa Mustafa, the deputy chairman of the al-Ghad party, was arrested by the Government of Egypt;

Whereas on February 9, 2005, Mousa Mustafa was released from prison, but he still faces charges of forgery;

Whereas on February 2, 2005, President George W. Bush, in his State of the Union address, stated that "the great and proud nation of Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East"; and

Whereas on February 15, 2005, Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, in a joint appearance with the Foreign Minister of Egypt, stated that “the Egyptian Government has the opportunity and the responsibility to be as great a leader for reform in the region as it has been a leader for peace”: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) condemns the arrest of Ayman Nour, the
4 leader of the al-Ghad party, by the Government of
5 the Arab Republic of Egypt;

6 (2) calls on the Government of Egypt to release
7 Ayman Nour without delay;

8 (3) calls on the Government of Egypt to ensure
9 that if tried, Ayman Nour and his deputy, Mousa
10 Mustafa, be charged according to regular criminal
11 law and tried in a regular criminal court and not a
12 State Security or State Security Emergency Court,
13 and that Ayman Nour and Mousa Mustafa be af-
14 farded the right to present a full defense;

15 (4) expresses its support for the people of
16 Egypt as they struggle for democracy and the estab-
17 lishment of the rule of law;

18 (5) expresses its support for President George
19 W. Bush’s call for greater democracy in Egypt,
20 which he made in the State of the Union address on
21 February 2, 2005;

1 (6) encourages the President and the Secretary
2 of State to reach out to human rights activists and
3 the nonviolent democratic opposition in Egypt, and
4 to assist them in their efforts; and

5 (7) encourages the People's Assembly of Egypt
6 to follow through on President Mubarak's call for
7 changes to the Egyptian Constitution that would
8 allow for direct, contested presidential elections in
9 Egypt.

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