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## **Mohamed Fahmy drops lawsuit against Al Jazeera**

Mohamed Fahmy has abandoned his multi-million dollar claim against Al Jazeera Media Network in Canada.

Mr Fahmy, one of three Al Jazeera English journalists who were arrested in December 2013 and tried, convicted and imprisoned in Cairo on false and politically motivated charges, had sought to place the blame for these events on Al Jazeera. He announced his lawsuit against the Network at a press conference held in May 2015, at the very time the Egyptian authorities were retrying his case, and stated that he was seeking the extraordinary sum of more than 100 million Canadian Dollars in damages.

Mr Fahmy thereafter continued to attack Al Jazeera and Qatar more generally, both in the Canadian proceedings and on public platforms, aligning himself alongside the Egyptian regime and its allies such as the UAE. In 2017 evidence emerged that Mr Fahmy was receiving funding from the UAE. He initially denied having any connection with the Emiratis or having received any funding from that source but was eventually forced to admit that he had been provided with at least USD 250,000 towards the costs of suing Al Jazeera by the UAE's Ambassador to Washington. From that point on, the Canadian claim was criticised in many quarters as having been brought merely as part of the UAE's ongoing campaign against Al Jazeera, with Mr Fahmy being viewed in some quarters as having been hired to play a role.

Mr Fahmy did not, as many people expected, abandon the Canadian proceedings as soon as his involvement with the UAE was uncovered. However, once arrangements were in hand for him to be cross-examined on the claims he had placed on the record, the position changed and he chose to abandon the claim altogether before cross-examination took place. He has agreed to be bound not to pursue any further legal claims or proceedings against Al Jazeera or its staff anywhere in the world and not to receive any payment of any kind from the Network or on its behalf.

Al Jazeera is itself pursuing a claim against the Egyptian government in respect of Egypt's mistreatment of Al Jazeera and its personnel, including the arrests, prosecution and convictions of its journalists. The hearing in that case is pending.

Speaking today, an Al Jazeera spokesman said:

*"Al Jazeera is committed to reporting the news without fear or favour and will always stand up for its journalists and the rights of all journalists to operate freely anywhere in the world without fear of arbitrary arrest, assault, prosecution or other forms of harassment and intimidation."*

*Al Jazeera worked extremely hard to support Mr Fahmy and his colleagues after their arrest and throughout their trial and imprisonment in Egypt and was extremely disappointed when Mr Fahmy sought to transfer blame for the oppressive and unlawful actions of the Egyptian authorities onto the Network. That it is now clear that he did this in collaboration with a regime that is fundamentally opposed to free and independent journalism only heightens our sense of disappointment.*

*In Al Jazeera's view, the fact that Mr Fahmy abandoned his claim against us rather than subject himself to cross-examination by our lawyers suggests that he clearly had more to hide."*

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