

STATEMENT BY HASSAN HEIKAL

22 February 2020

Today, after eight years of legal proceedings in Egypt, I have been cleared by the Cairo Criminal Court of all allegations in the case known as the 'Stock Exchange case'.

The Court based its verdict on the firm conclusions of the 2017 Court-appointed independent Expert Committee headed by His Excellency Judge Yehia el-Dakrouri, the former head of Egypt's Court of Administrative Justice and former deputy head of the Egyptian State Council,¹ which completely exonerated me.

Page 66 of the Expert Committee's Report, issued on 2 July 2018 and signed by all members of the Committee, states the following:

"Based on the inspection, it is evident to the Committee that:

- *Mr Hassan Mohamed Hassanien Heikal did not hold any executive or non-executive position in Al Watany Bank of Egypt and was not a member of the Bank's Board of Directors.*
- *[Mr Heikal] did not deal with Al Watany Bank of Egypt's shares, whether for selling or purchasing purposes, during the period subject of the inspection. He further did not obtain any personal benefits as a result of EFG Hermes's dealings with those shares. [...]*
- *The attorney of [Mr Heikal] presented the commercial registration documents of the Horus II Fund, authenticated by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is evident from the said registration documents that Mr Hassan Heikal [...] had no connection with the said Fund. [...]"*

Until today, I have generally avoided speaking publicly about this case. Now that the Court has issued its ruling in line with the conclusions of the Expert Committee, I would like to state the following:

- 1) I worked in Egypt from 1994 until 2013. During this period, Egypt was led by a succession of different administrations, and in this respect, I would like to state that I do not owe anything to any of them. I have never had any commercial or other dealings with any Egyptian government, and I have never received any benefits, material (e.g., land, loans, privatised companies) or otherwise, from any government. I am a proud Egyptian and hold no other passport.

¹ Judge el-Dakrouri's fellow Committee members were Dr Laila Ahmad el-Khawaga, a member of the Board of the Directors of the Central Bank of Egypt; Mr Ahmed Ashraf Kouchouk, Deputy Minister of Finance and a member of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank of Egypt; Mr Hushin Adel, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Egyptian Stock Exchange; and Counsellor Rida Abdul Muti, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of Egypt's Financial Regulatory Authority.

- 2) As far as my relationship with the sons of former Egyptian President Mubarak, Alaa and Gamal Mubarak, is concerned, I had never met Alaa until I sat next to him in Court. As for Gamal, I have met him approximately ten times in my life. I have never spoken to him over the phone. I did not invite him to my wedding, and he did not invite me to his. I never joined his political party (the National Democratic Party). The reason is understandable and human: I am the son of Mohamed Hassanien Heikal, one of the earliest journalists in Egypt to voice his opposition against the possibility of Gamal coming to power, and as a consequence, there was a natural barrier between us. If I were close to the Mubaraks, I would not have been one of the few bankers to join the nascent revolution in Tahrir Square in 2011.
- 3) As a banker, I played an important role in building the largest investment bank in the Arab world: EFG Hermes. When I joined the bank, it operated in a single country; at the point of my departure, it had operations in twelve. When I started, the bank was heavily indebted; when I left, it had the largest liquidity of any investment bank in the Arab region. However, what I consider to be my most important contribution to EFG Hermes, and the accomplishment I am proudest of, is the fact that I left behind a true institution. On 30 May 2012, the day the public prosecutor issued the indictment against me, I offered my resignation to EFG Hermes's Board of Directors, which contained representatives of the bank's two largest shareholders (i.e., the Governments of Abu Dhabi and Dubai). The Board unanimously declined my resignation. When I insisted on my resignation a year and a half later, in October 2013, the region's largest sovereign wealth fund, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, sold its entire shareholding in the company after a month. That is the value of a banker. His net worth is made up of his work, his mind, his reputation and his relationships.
- 4) To my knowledge, I am the only Egyptian ever to have returned to his home country to stand trial and face the possibility of imprisonment.

I would like to return to page 66 of the Expert Committee's Report, whose lead author is His Excellency Judge Dakrouri. In light of the eminence, seniority and independence of the Committee's Chairman and members, I view that page as a certificate of innocence, which I hold up not just to my family, but also to the court of public opinion. If only my father was here to witness this day.