



Ted Cruz Praises Repressive Egyptian Leader

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Three of the four Republican presidential candidates went up to bat (relatively anyway) for Muslims last night following frontrunner Donald Trump's assertion that "Islam hates us."

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) used the opportunity to cite a Muslim leader as a shining example of someone the United States should be supporting — and not alienating, a la Trump.

"Let me give you an example of a Muslim for example, we ought to be standing with," Cruz told the crowd of Republicans in Miami. "President [Abdel Fattah] el-Sisi of Egypt, a president of a Muslim country who is targeting radical Islamic terrorists."

This isn't the first time Cruz has directed praise at el-Sisi. "Why don't we see the president of the United States demonstrating that same courage [as el-Sisi] just to speak the truth about the face of evil we're facing right now?" Cruz asked during the first Republican presidential debate last year.

El-Sisi's reign in Egypt has been called "worse than the dictators" of the past by the Guardian, while the Cato Institute has called him a man who rules with a level of "tyranny Mubarak only dreamed of."

ThinkProgress traveled to Egypt last summer, and many people, including an Egyptian human rights activist, said the situation under el-Sisi, with regard to human rights and basic freedoms, was worse than ever before.

This is the same regime that sentenced a four-year old boy to life in prison. Authorities later admitted a mistake in this case, but only after the boy's father spent 18 months as a fugitive.

On Friday, mere hours after Cruz's comments, the Financial Times ran a piece titled "Egypt escalates crackdown on dissent."

"Over the past two years Egypt has witnessed its harshest crackdown on dissent in decades, say rights groups," FT reported. "They have documented a sharp rise in restrictions on basic

freedoms, and an increase in torture and deaths in custody which some analysts say is a sign that the security establishment feels empowered under Mr Sisi.”