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Contact: Shona Cook
scook@penguinrandomhouse.com

THE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP TO DEVELOP MOHAMED FAHMY'S MEMOIR *THE MARRIOTT CELL* AS A FEATURE FILM

(London) February 1, 2016: The Development Partnership today announced that they will develop Mohamed Fahmy's upcoming memoir *The Marriott Cell*, which will be published by Penguin Random House Canada in October, as a feature film.

Weaving together the true-life story of three innocent journalists working for Al Jazeera English who were imprisoned for 400 days in Egypt's Scorpion prison, the book portrays the complex geopolitical web of score-settling that leaves them caught in an extraordinary struggle toward their path for freedom. The political thriller encompasses the dramatic televised arrest, trial, and incarceration of bureau chief Fahmy and his two colleagues, award-winning Australian correspondent Peter Greste and Egyptian producer Baher Mohamed in 2013.

"A feature is going to allow us to relive and dramatically portray what no news reel grasped; one's inner voice caught in an emotional struggle between lawlessness, failed corporate decisions, and bureaucratic red tape that left us in a vicious Kafkaesque black hole fighting for our lives and that bigger cause of press freedom," said Fahmy

On board to write the adaptation of Fahmy's memoir is Micheal Bronner, co-producer of Paul Greengrass' *GREEN ZONE*, *CAPTAIN PHILIPS*, and *UNITED 93* and writer/ producer/ director of *CHASING PLANES: WITNESSES TO 9/11* on Channel 4. Bonner is a former 60 Minutes journalist.

"What attracts me to *The Marriott Cell* – aside from its setting in the wrenching tumult of Egypt's revolution and the sheer outrage at the imprisonment of journalists on trumped up terrorism charges – is the intimate journey of these three wrongfully accused men who realize, in the confines of their squalid, shoebox cell, that there is no credible system by which they can prove their innocence in court. Incredibly, Fahmy, while literally still shackled in prison, makes a gut call to go on offensive," commented Bronner.

Award-winning Egyptian actor/producer Amr Waked (*SYRIANA*/ *HOUSE OF SADDAM*/ *SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMON*) is developing the project with TDP. Amr crossed paths with journalist Mohamed Fahmy on the frontlines of the "Arab Spring" during the latter's CNN coverage on Egypt's treacherous streets. Waked is poised to reflect the tribulations of a journalist imprisoned in Scorpion, the maximum-security prison with some of the Middle East's most hardened Al Qaeda and ISIS extremists.

In October 2016, Penguin Random House Canada will release Mr. Fahmy's powerful, multi-layered narrative to a wide general readership in a book of the same name, *The Marriott Cell*. The book will additionally feature a foreword by the international human rights lawyer Amal Clooney and is edited by the award-winning writer Carol Shaben.

Louise Dennys, Executive Publisher and Executive Vice-President, Penguin Random House Canada, who acquired World Rights, said: "This important book reads like a thriller, and its shrewd close-quarters perspective will make it essential reading. Mr. Fahmy's internationally controversial imprisonment gave him unusual access to leading jihadists and insight into what's happening in the region. Combined with his authoritative understanding of the region and worldwide consequences of the increasing violence, it provides a rare window onto the players and their personal and global ambitions, Western governments included."

Mohamed Fahmy is renowned for his award-winning coverage of events in North Africa and the Middle East. He covered the Iraq War for the Los Angeles Times in 2003. In 2007 he served as a delegate in Lebanon for the International Committee of the Red Cross on the rights of political prisoners, the missing and refugees. In 2011, he and his CNN associates were honoured with a Peabody award for the network's coverage of the Arab Spring. In 2012, he won The Tom Renner Investigative Reporting Award for producing the CNN Freedom Project documentary series "Death in the Desert." He co-authored Egyptian Freedom Story, a photo documentary of the 2011 January 25th revolution, and in September 2013 became the Egypt Bureau Chief for Al Jazeera English news channel. He was arrested that December with two of his Al Jazeera English colleagues, accused of conspiring with the Muslim Brotherhood and fabricating news damaging to Egypt, and sentenced to seven-ten years in a maximum-security prison. In October 2015, Mr. Fahmy was released, following widespread international pressure.

Mohamed Fahmy received the Canadian Committee for World Press Freedom Award and was honoured on World Press Freedom Day by the Canadian Commission of UNESCO. In 2015, he and his two colleagues received the Royal Television Journalism Judges' Award. In 2015 he founded the Fahmy Foundation for a Free Press – a non-profit organization based in Vancouver – dedicated to providing financial assistance and advocating on behalf of imprisoned journalists and photographers around the world.

CONTACTS:

About the book: Shona Cook, Publicity Manager, Penguin Random House Canada

scook@penguinrandomhouse.com (416) 957.1576

For International Book Rights: Suzanne Brandreth, Director, Subsidiary Rights, The Cooke Agency International, sbrandreth@cookeinternational.com (647) 788-4011