

A French backpacker who went missing in Egypt returns after one year

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A French backpacker who went missing in Egypt a year ago has safely returned home to Paris, a lawyer representing his family said on Tuesday.

It's not clear what happened over the past year to Yann Bourdon, whose family had speculated that he might have been detained by Egyptian security services.

The graduate student at the Sorbonne, who vanished while on a year-long **backpacking** journey, declined to discuss his disappearance with the media and to share details of his return to **France**.

The French backpacker's family had not heard from him in a year

Sarah Sakouti, a legal counsel for the Geneva-based Committee for Justice that had pressed the Egyptian and French authorities to investigate the 27-year-old's disappearance, said Bourdon flew from Cairo to **Paris** on 10 August.

A day before, Bourdon had phoned his sister in Paris from the French Consulate in **Cairo**, according to Sakouti. The same day, Egyptian state security services had announced they would facilitate Bourdon's return to Paris.

Before that, his family and friends had last heard from Bourdon in August 2021.

Family members pressed for answers about his disappearance

After months of silence and stonewalling from Egyptian authorities, Bourdon's desperate family decided to go public. They used Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi's official visit to Paris on 22 July to press for an **investigation**.

They stood on a **Paris** sidewalk and raised placards asking, "Where is Yann Bourdon, President Sissi?" before a motorcade drove past carrying el-Sissi to a meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Forced disappearances are becoming more common in Egypt

International rights groups have in recent years documented a growing number of forced disappearances by Egyptian authorities. **Egypt**'s 2011 popular uprising against Hosni Mubarak, the former longtime president, grew out of demands for an end to police brutality and extrajudicial practices.

Since el-Sissi ascended to power in 2014, most of the freedoms gained after the 2011 uprising have been revoked. The government has carried out a wide-reaching **crackdown** on dissent, jailing thousands of people – many of them without a trial.

The vast majority of those detained have been Egyptian citizens.

