



**Middle  
East  
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August 28, 2013

Prime Minister Hazem AlBeblawi  
Magles El Shaab St., Kasr El Aini St.  
Cairo, Egypt  
Fax # 20-2-7958048/7958016; [primemin@idsc.gov.eg](mailto:primemin@idsc.gov.eg)

Dear Prime Minister AlBeblawi,

I write on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) to express our concern about the arrest and detention of two Canadian citizens, John Greyson and Tarek Loubani, in Cairo almost two weeks ago.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa. The preeminent organization in the field, MESA publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has nearly 3000 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

Both men were in Egypt en route to Gaza for academic purposes, namely, medical collaboration with al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza. Mr. Greyson, a film-maker and professor in the Department of Film at York University, was preparing a film about the Canadian-Gazan collaboration. Dr. Loubani, who is an emergency room medical physician as well as professor of emergency medicine at the University of Western Ontario, is also one of the architects of the Canada-Gaza project. It is a project that has brought doctors from the University of Western Ontario to Gaza to train physicians in Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) and Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS).

Mssrs. Greyson and Loubani arrived in Cairo on August 15 with the intention of traveling to Gaza immediately. However, because of the volatile situation in Egypt, travel to the border with Gaza was problematic. So they delayed their departure to Gaza by one day. On August 16, they became lost in Cairo and entered a police station to ask for directions back to their hotel. Instead of being given directions, they were arrested. At 4 pm Toronto time (10 pm Cairo time), Dr. Loubani was able to call his primary contact in Canada and leave the very short message: "we are being arrested by Egyptian police."

Since then, it has not been possible to have telephone contact with either one. There is no reason for either of these men to be detained. They have broken no Egyptian law and represent no threat to the Government of Egypt. Therefore, we call upon you and your fellow officials to release Mr. Greyson and Dr. Loubani promptly and not hinder them in their academic as well as humanitarian project. We await a prompt, positive response to this simple request.

Thank you,

Peter Sluglett  
MESA President  
Visiting Research Professor, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

cc: President Adly Mansour  
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Canadian Embassy, Cairo, Egypt ([cairo@international.gc.ca](mailto:cairo@international.gc.ca))