



Middle East Studies Association of North America

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His Excellency Hosni Mubarak
President of the Republic
Aruba Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt

Your Excellency:

The Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association remains deeply concerned that your government has decided to dissolve the Arab Womens' Solidarity Association (AWSA), by decree of the Deputy Governor of Cairo, dated 15 June 1991. The Middle East Studies Association of North America comprises 2200 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa. The association publishes the respected *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. The association is committed to ensuring respect for academic freedom throughout the region.

AWSA has played an important role in Egypt and internationally by promoting research and hosting conferences that bring together Arab and foreign scholars to examine critical issues related to the status of women in the Arab world. AWSA would have held a conference last autumn, with World Bank funding, in order to assess issues of women and development in the Arab world.

We respectfully request that your government reconsider the decision to close AWSA. Egypt has ratified and is bound by the international covenant on civil and political rights, which provides for the right of freedom of association in Article 22. Moreover, Article 47 of the Egyptian Constitution guarantees freedom of opinion and the right to publicize views verbally and in writing. We fear that the closure of AWSA will contribute to restricting intellectual freedom and freedom of association in Egypt.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Anne H. Betteridge
Executive Director

cc: Osama al-Baz, Advisor to the President, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egypt
Amr Mousa, Minister of Foreign Affairs
Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Dr. Amal Othman, Minister of Social Affairs
Ambassador El-Sayed Abdel Raouf el-Reedy
Ambassador Robert Pelletreau