



Middle East Studies Association of North America

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July 21, 1992

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 is distressed to learn that the State Council's Administrative Judicial Court upheld on May 7 the decree dissolving the Egyptian branch of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA) and refused to grant an injunction that would have allowed AWSA to continue operating while it awaits the outcome of its appeal. The Middle East Studies Association comprises 2300 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* and is committed to ensuring respect for the principles of academic freedom and human rights throughout the region.

AWSA has played an important role in Egypt and internationally by promoting research and hosting conferences on critical issues related to the status of women in the Arab world. Its registration in 1985 described AWSA's purposes: "to elevate the cultural and educational level of Egyptian women, to discuss the problems faced by women, to raise the level of health in the family by raising the hygienic and social consciousness of women, to establish a cultural library, and to strengthen social and educational relations with Arab women." We are concerned that AWSA will no longer be able to fulfill those purposes and that its members will not even have access to its office during the remainder of the legal appeals process.

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. Moreover, 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
Ambassador El-Sayed Abdel Raouf el-Reedy
Ambassador Robert Pelletreau