

May 30, 2001

His Excellency Hosni Mubarak
President
Republic of Egypt
By facsimile: 011-202-390-1998

Your Excellency:

On July 11, 2000 the Committee on Academic Freedom in the Middle East and North Africa (CAF MENA) wrote to you to express our concerns regarding the arrest of Professor Saad Eddin Ibrahim and staff members of the Ibn Khaldun Center.

The Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) comprises 2700 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa, and is the preeminent professional association in the field. The association publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, and is committed to ensuring respect for principles of academic freedom and freedom of expression in the region and in connection with the study of the region.

We are writing again to voice our deep distress both at the manner in which the trial was conducted by the Supreme Security Court, and the unduly harsh sentences imposed on Professor Ibrahim and his colleagues.

The conduct of the Court and its verdicts confirm the essentially political nature of this case. Further, the results of this trial undermine Egypt's standing in the international community and its reputation as a state committed to the rule of law. The Court's disregard of evidence provided by lawyers for the defense is especially troubling. We urge you to permit an appeal of these verdicts, an option to which Egypt is committed by virtue of international conventions your government has signed. Your intervention in support of an appeal would be an important signal of your Government's commitment to democracy and to the full exercise of academic freedom by all Egyptians.

Respectfully yours,

Anne H. Betteridge
Executive Director

Cc: Ambassador Nabil Fahmy, Washington, DC
Maj-Gen Habib Ibrahim El-Adly, Minister of the Interior
His Excellency Farouq Mahmoud Seif el-Nasr, Minister of Justice

