



**Middle  
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July 6, 2018

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Prime Solicitor General Khaled Diauddin  
Supreme State Security Prosecution in the Arab Republic of Egypt  
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Dear Members of Supreme State Security Prosecution in the Arab Republic of Egypt:

We write to you on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association of North America to express our concern regarding the arrest on 23 May 2018 of Waleed Khalil el-Sayed Salem, a University of Washington Ph.D. student who was conducting dissertation research in Cairo at that time and who remains in detention. In this regard, we wish to offer some background on his doctoral research.

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

Mr. Salem's research examines how judges and lawyers in Egypt interact with each other and with other state offices. His research promises to contribute to our understanding of the way that judges and lawyers work as part of the legal system within the context of a particular state. This research will be of great interest to scholars of judiciaries in other countries. For scholars of comparative law, Egypt is the most important country in the Middle East, as it is the home of major innovators in Arab legal thought such as Abd al-Raziq al-Sanhuri, and its civil code has served as the model for many other Arab countries. Egypt has also developed an exceptionally rich tradition of jurisprudence, particularly through the decisions of its administrative courts and Supreme Constitutional Court. The rulings of these courts are read widely and shape the development of judicial philosophy throughout the region.

Mr. Salem's research is based on interviews with judges and lawyers as well as coverage of their activities in the media and examination of relevant archives. Such methods are essential for a scholar to achieve an accurate understanding of how judges and lawyers behave. This work, particularly interviews, is a central part of most doctoral and post-doctoral research conducted in universities throughout the world. Students in universities in the United States and Europe are encouraged to learn directly from the countries they study rather than rely on sources outside that country. There is no motivation for Mr. Salem's work other than conducting research of the highest accuracy and quality that will shed light on the development of the Egyptian judiciary.



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Mr. Salem is a young scholar, but he has already established a reputation among those who know him for the serious and scholarly nature of his work.

We hope that this information is helpful and we ask that you release Mr. Salem and allow him to continue his research that promises to make an important contribution to scholarship on comparative judicial systems.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith E. Tucker', written over a horizontal line.

Judith E. Tucker  
MESA President  
Professor, Georgetown University

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy W. Newhall', written in a cursive style.

Amy W. Newhall  
MESA Executive Director