



**Middle  
East  
Studies  
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of North America, Inc.

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11 July 2019

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President, Arab Republic of Egypt  
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His Excellency Sameh Shoukry  
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Arab Republic of Egypt  
Fax: +20-2-576-7967

Major-General Mahmoud Tawfiq  
Minister of the Interior, Arab Republic of Egypt  
Fax: +20-2-796-0682  
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Your Excellencies President al-Sisi, Mr. Shoukry, and Major-General Tawfiq:

We write to you on behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) to demand that you investigate new information provided to you in November 2018 and May 2019 by the Italian authorities on the kidnapping, torture and killing of Italian graduate student Giulio Regeni in Egypt in early 2016.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote 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* and has over 2,500 members worldwide. 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. Regeni was a Ph.D. student in the Department of Politics and International Studies at the University of Cambridge and a visiting scholar at the American University of Cairo (AUC). He was conducting research on Egypt's independent trade union movement for his doctoral dissertation when he disappeared in Cairo on 25 January 2016. His body was found by the side of the Cairo-Alexandria highway on 3 February and showed signs of extensive torture; his skin had been burned with cigarettes, several bones were broken, many of his teeth were shattered or missing, and his right earlobe had been cut off. Italian autopsy reports suggest that Mr. Regeni was tortured over a period of four days, finally dying when his neck was broken.

We first wrote to you on [4 February 2016](#), the day after Mr. Regeni's body was found, demanding that your government conduct a full and impartial investigation of his death. Since that letter, the international community has learned that Mr. Regeni was placed under government surveillance in the weeks before his death, and has witnessed a concerted effort by your government over the past three years to obstruct a credible investigation, leading to the conclusion that security officials are likely responsible for Mr. Regeni's murder. In September 2016 then-Attorney General Nabil Sadeq said

that informant Mohammed Abdullah had contacted the security services in early January 2016 to report that he believed Mr. Regeni was a spy; Mr. Regeni was then placed under police surveillance for several days. In March 2016 the government attempted to place the blame for Mr. Regeni's murder on a civilian gang. Four men accused by the government of preying on foreigners were shot and killed by the police, with the Interior Ministry circulating pictures of Mr. Regeni's passport and other personal documents which it claimed were recovered from the house of one of the dead "gang" members. The prosecution office in New Cairo, however, denied that there was any link between the men and Mr. Regeni.

Attempts by the Italian authorities to investigate the case have consistently been blocked. In May 2018 Italian investigators were finally granted access to closed-circuit TV recordings from Cairo metro stations in the area in which Mr. Regeni disappeared, but in June a joint statement by the Egyptian and Italian prosecution authorities revealed that the recordings were missing several sections, noting that "further investigations are needed to ascertain the causes" of the gaps. In November 2018, after the tenth meeting between Rome's deputy public prosecutor Sergio Colaiocco and Egyptian authorities, Italian authorities named five Egyptian national security agents as suspects in Mr. Regeni's death. Italian media reports that two of these agents are thought to have recruited informant Mohammed Abdullah to spy on Mr. Regeni. In December, the Egyptian State Information Services responded to the naming of the five suspects with a statement titled "Julio (sic) Regeni's case: charges should be based on evidence and not suspicions" that "Egyptian law does not recognise what is called 'the record of suspects.'"

New evidence emerged in May 2019 to suggest that security agents organized and carried out Mr. Regeni's torture and murder. An unidentified person announced that while attending a police convention in Africa in 2017, he overheard an Egyptian intelligence agent, whose name he subsequently learned, saying that Mr. Regeni was believed to be a British spy and was kidnapped by the intelligence services; the speaker said that he had personally struck Mr. Regeni, apparently after the agents forced him into a car. Italian officials passed this information on to the Egyptian government. In mid-June Mr. Colaiocco confirmed that the Italian prosecution team has received no response.

As the pre-eminent scholarly organization in North America advancing scholarship on the Middle East and North Africa, we must demand accountability for the torture and murder of a foreign scholar whose only "crime" was to engage in academic research on Egyptian associational life.

We await your response,



Re: Murder investigation of Giulio Regeni  
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith E. Tucker', written in a cursive style.

Judith E. Tucker  
MESA President  
Professor, Georgetown University

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurie Brand', written in a cursive style.

Laurie Brand  
Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom  
Professor, University of Southern California

cc:

Dr. Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific  
Research  
Mr. Frank Riccardone, President, American University of Cairo  
The Honorable Yasser Reda, Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to  
the United States