

Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc.
University of Arizona
1232 North Cherry Avenue
Tucson, Arizona 85721

May 12, 1993

His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan Al-Bashir
Head of State and Defense Minister
People's Palace. POB 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Your Excellency:

The Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association is deeply concerned by the seizure of the Khartoum branch of Cairo University on March 9, 1993. 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.

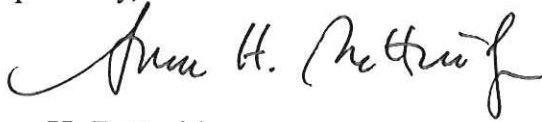
We are disturbed that the presidential decree unilaterally revoked the license of the Khartoum branch of the Cairo University which was issued in 1955, in violation of bilateral agreements with the Egyptian government. We understand that the branch has been renamed Nilein University (University of the Two Niles) and that a Sudanese president has been appointed to replace the Egyptian president. We are also concerned that the Egyptian faculty and staff have been prevented from teaching and performing their duties at the university and that 86 students were arrested on March 9 after protesting the seizure. The government's unilateral action violates the academic autonomy and integrity of the university and seriously disrupts the education of thousands of students.

The seizure of the Khartoum branch of Cairo University occurs in the context of the confiscation of seventeen Egyptian administered schools in the Sudan, which is scheduled for the coming July. It also occurs in the context of the ongoing dismissal of professors from the University of Khartoum and other Sudanese universities and the government's interference in the self-governance of universities, which we protested in our letter of October 22, 1992.

We request that your government reverse the seizure of the Khartoum branch of Cairo University, restore dismissed faculty and staff to their posts in universities throughout the Sudan, and uphold the academic and administrative independence of the institutions of higher education.

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

Respectfully,



Anne H. Betteridge
Executive Director

AHB/sp

cc: Ambassador Abdalla Ahmed Abdalla, Embassy of the Republic of The Sudan
Ambassador Ahmed Maher El-Sayed, Embassy of Egypt
Ambassador Donald K. Peterson, Embassy of the United States of America, Sudan
Ambassador Robert H. Pelletreau, Embassy of the United States of America, Egypt
Dr. Ibrahim Ahmad Umar, Minister of Higher Education of The Sudan
Dr. Kamel Baheldin, Minister of Higher Education of Egypt
Dr. Suleiman Abu Salih, Foreign Minister of The Sudan
Minister Amr Moussa, Foreign Minister of Egypt
Mr. Jeff Lumstead, Sudan Desk, U. S. Department of State
Mr. Steven Morrison, Africa Subcommittee, House Committee on International Relations