

**Middle
East
Studies
Association**
of North America, Inc.

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8 June 2011

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the United Arab Emirates

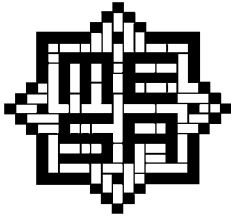
Dear Sheikh Al Nahyan,

I write to you on behalf of the Middle East Studies Association and its Committee on Academic Freedom to express our deep concern over the arrest of Professor Nasser bin Ghaith. According to published reports, state security forces removed Dr. bin Ghaith from his home in Dubai on April 10, 2011 and seized his computer. Dr. bin Ghaith is a highly regarded lecturer on economics at the Abu Dhabi branch of France's Sorbonne University. He was an active participant in the 2010 Doha Debates, a respected forum for dialogue, and has participated in symposiums sponsored by the Dubai School of Government, a research and teaching institution that focuses on public policy in the Arab world. He has also been affiliated with the UAE Armed Forces Staff College.

The Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching of the Middle East and North Africa. The preeminent organization in the field, MESA publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has nearly 3000 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.

Your Embassy in the United States explains on its website that the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MOHESR) is "committed to developing a well-educated citizenry, promoting [the] country's economic development, contributing to the UAE's global competitiveness and enhancing [the] UAE's quality of life." Its vision is "...to evolve a well-educated society that can cope with development." These are precisely the goals to which Professor bin Ghaith has been committed and which he has long expressed in his academic work.

Thus, his arrest raises deep concern about its motivation. It also raises serious questions about the restrictions upon free speech in the Emirates in general and about respect for academic freedom in particular. Pending his earliest release, we ask that you disclose his whereabouts, ensure his well-being, and provide him regular access to medical treatment and to his family. We would like to urge that he be released promptly, accorded his full right to self-expression, and allowed to resume his professional responsibilities without conditions or limitations on his academic freedom and without professional sanction or penalty.



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Re: Arrest of Professor Nasser bin Ghaith

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We look forward to your reply.

Yours Sincerely,

Suad Joseph

MESA President

Professor of Anthropology and Women's Studies

University of California Davis

cc:

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