

September 8, 2015

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Harper:

Re: Canadian journalist Mohamed Fahmy

We write to you today to add our voices to those of Mohamed Fahmy's family, his legal team and rights organizations around the world. Like them, we implore you to take personal and immediate action to secure Mr. Fahmy's deportation to Canada.

Mr. Fahmy's conviction and sentence by the Egyptian court to three years in prison for his work as a journalist was described by Amnesty International as "a farcical verdict which strikes at the heart of freedom of expression". The charges against Fahmy and his colleagues were "baseless and politicized"; the journalists "should never have been arrested and tried in the first place".

These sentiments have been echoed by governments around the world including those of the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union as well as by the United Nations and countless human rights and press freedom organizations.

Canada's Minister of State has expressed "disappointment" with a verdict that "severely undermines confidence in the rule of law in Egypt". Indeed, it is beyond dispute that Mr. Fahmy was denied the most rudimentary due process and was convicted on the basis of evidence so flimsy and distorted as to be absurd.

The world knows that Mr. Fahmy is an innocent man trapped in a political nightmare – that he is in prison simply for doing his job. The world also knows that the conditions of Egypt's notorious Tora prison pose a grave danger to Mr. Fahmy's safety and health.

Mr. Fahmy's legal team, together with experts from around the world, are unanimous in the view that direct and persistent requests from you personally to President al-Sisi are Mr. Fahmy's only hope for release. In the words of Amnesty International Canada's Secretary General Alex Neve, "the Egyptian government needs to hear frequently, firmly and consistently from the Prime Minister himself."


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There is certainly positive precedent to suggest that this is the case. Maher Arar, for example, was freed from a Syrian prison only after the Canadian Prime Minister became directly involved in his cause. Peter Greste, convicted alongside Mr. Fahmy on identical charges in June 2014, was returned home seven months ago after direct and persistent intervention by Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

While we recognize and appreciate Canada's efforts to date – including consular services on the ground in Cairo and the Minister of State's repeated expressions of concern – it is clear that new efforts are required. We urge you, as our Prime Minister, to communicate directly with President al-Sisi about Canada's need to have Mr. Fahmy returned home safely and swiftly. It goes to the very heart of what it means to be Canadian that we defend the rule of law and protect our fellow citizens from harm.

We call on you to make these commitments meaningful in the case of Mr. Fahmy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Moist", written in a cursive style.

PAUL MOIST
National President

:jv/ceu
c.c.: T. Mulcair; J. Trudeau; C. Fleury