

Wednesday, June-25-14

The Rt. Honourable Prime Minister  
Stephen Harper  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6  
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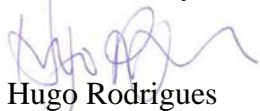
Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Journalists, I write to ask you to continue to intervene and speak out in the case of Canadian-Egyptian journalist Mohamed Fahmy, following Monday's court ruling in Cairo convicting him and two other Al-Jazeera colleagues of terrorism-related charges. Your counterpart in Australia has spoken personally to the Egyptian president. While we applaud the statements by yourself and other Canadian officials, including Minister of State Lynne Yelich and Canadian Ambassador to Egypt David Drake, we now think it would be most effective if you were to assume leadership of the efforts of lobbying the Egyptian government and urging them to reconsider the verdict and free Mr. Fahmy. Or if all else fails, ask to pardon him, and release him as soon as possible. We say the allegations against Fahmy and his colleagues from Al-Jazeera English in Cairo were ridiculous from the outset. We believe, as Fahmy has said all along, he was simply doing his job of informing the public about the news occurring in a turbulent time in Egypt's political history. Monday's sentence is further proof the current Egyptian regime is not interested in safeguarding the rights of its people, but rather, wants to clamp down on the circulation of independent news and ideas and current affairs reporting.

These are not the values that Canadians hold dearest when it comes to the right of free expression. A Canadian citizen's ability to exercise his freedom of expression has been unacceptably constrained. From the time of Fahmy's arrest in December 2013, the Canadian Association of Journalists has supported various public initiatives to urge the Egyptian government to free these journalists, led by our partners at the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. We fear that Monday's ruling will now make it even more dangerous for local and foreign journalists based in Egypt to do their jobs.

The Canadian Association of Journalists represents over 600 journalists based both in Canada and abroad, and, for nearly 40 years, our association has stood for the public's right to know. Monday's ruling is a tremendous blow to the ideal of democracy in Egypt, and an affront to our members.

Your sincerely,



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