

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 has been described as a "farfetched 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".

Le 8 septembre 2015

Honorable Premier ministre du Canada, M. Stephen Harper
Chambre des communes
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6

Cher premier ministre Harper,

Sujet: **Le journaliste canadien Mohamed Fahmy**

Nous vous écrivons aujourd'hui pour ajouter nos voix à celles de la famille de Mohamed Fahmy, de son équipe juridique et des organisations de droits de la personne à travers le monde qui se positionnent en solidarité avec M. Fahmy. Comme eux, nous vous implorons de vous impliquer personnellement et immédiatement pour assurer que M. Fahmy soit rapidement déporté au Canada.

La condamnation par le tribunal égyptien et la sentence de trois ans de prison de M. Fahmy, accusé pour son travail en tant que journaliste, a été décrit comme « un verdict grotesque qui attaque directement la liberté d'expression ». Les accusations qui pèsent contre M. Fahmy et ses collègues sont sans fondement et politisées. Ces journalistes n'auraient jamais dû être arrêtés et jugés.

Ces sentiments sont partagés par des gouvernements à travers le monde, incluant les États-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne, l'Union européenne et de nombreuses organisations comme l'ONU qui se consacrent au respect des droits de la personne et à la liberté de la presse.

Le ministre de l'État a déjà exprimé sa « déception » face à ce verdict qui « compromet sérieusement notre confiance en l'État de droit du régime égyptien ». En effet, il est indiscutable que M. Fahmy n'a pas eu droit à de procédures équitables. Il a été condamné sur la base de preuves tellement piètres et biaisées qu'elles frôlent l'absurde.

La communauté internationale sait que M. Fahmy est une victime innocente, embourbée dans un cauchemar politique. Il est en prison pour avoir simplement fait son travail. Le monde sait aussi que les conditions de détention dans l'infâme prison égyptienne Tora posent une menace certaine pour sa santé et sa sécurité.

L'équipe juridique de M. Fahmy, appuyée par des experts internationaux, est unanime en disant que le seul espoir pour la relâche de M. Fahmy réside dans une intervention soutenue de votre part auprès du président égyptien al-Sisi. « Le président égyptien doit entendre la voix de notre premier ministre fermement, régulièrement et constamment » a dit Alex Neve, le secrétaire général d'Amnistie Internationale.

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 Canada's Prime Minister, to communicate directly with President al-Sisi the 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 sincerely,

The Honourable Louise Arbour, C.C., G.O.Q.

Raffi Cavoukian, C.M., O.B.C.

Paul D. Copeland, C.M.

Jim Cuddy, O.C.

Louise Denny, C.M.

Marlys Edwardh, C.M.

Atom Egoyan, O.C.

Charles Foran, C.M.

John Fraser, C.M.

Joy Kogawa, C.M., O.B.C.

Michele Landsberg, O.C.

Mary Jo Leddy, C.M.

Stephen Lewis, C.C.

The Right Honourable Paul Martin, P.C., C.C.

Maurice McGregor, O.C., O.Q., M.D.

Rick Mercer, O.C.

Roy Miki, C.M., O.B.C.

Balfour M. Mount, O.C., O.Q., M.D.

Alex Neve, O.C.

Michael Ondaatje, O.C.

Stewart Phillip

Sarah Polley, O.C.

John Ralston Saul, C.C., O.Ont.

Le passé en témoigne. Maher Arar a été libéré d'une prison syrienne quand le bureau du premier ministre s'est impliqué directement dans son dossier. Peter Greste, arrêté avec M. Fahmy en juin 2014 et faisant face aux mêmes accusations, est retourné chez lui il y a sept mois suite à l'intervention directe du premier ministre australien Tony Abbott.

Bien que nous reconnaissons et apprécions ce que le Canada a fait à ce jour - incluant les services consulaires au Caire et les déclarations répétées du ministre de l'État exprimant ses préoccupations - il est clair que de nouveaux efforts sont requis.

Nous vous exhortons à entrer en contact avec le président al-Sisi pour que M. Fahmy puisse revenir rapidement au Canada en toute sécurité. Ça va au cœur de ce que c'est d'être canadien : respecter l'État de droit et s'assurer que nos concitoyens soient hors de danger.

Nous vous demandons de respecter ces engagements fondamentaux dans le cas de M. Fahmy.

Sincèrement,

Artist

Lawyer

Musician (Blue Rodeo)

Executive Publisher & Executive Vice-President, Random House of Canada

Lawyer

Film Director

Author

President and CEO, National Newsmedia Council of Canada and Master Emeritus, Massey College

Author

Author and columnist

Chair, Writers in Exile Committee, PEN Canada

Former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations

Former Prime Minister of Canada

Professor Emeritus, McGill University

Comedian; host of "Rick Mercer Report"

Professor Emeritus, Simon Fraser University

Emeritus Professor, Faculty of Medicine, McGill University

Secretary General, Amnesty International Canada

Author

Grand Chief, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs

Filmmaker

International President, PEN International

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Shelagh Rogers, O.C.	CBC Broadcaster
Clayton Ruby, C.M.	Lawyer, Ruby & Shiller Barristers
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Stephen Andrews	Artist
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Hugh Armstrong	Professor Emeritus, Carleton University
Pat Armstrong	Distinguished Research Professor of Sociology, York University
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Nellie Barbour	
Sandra Bartlett	Independent Journalist
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John Greyson	Filmmaker
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