

Ottawa

Pièce 879, Édifice de la Confédération
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6
Tél. : 613-992-6779
Télec. : 613-995-8461



CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

Ottawa

Room 879, Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-992-6779
Fax.: 613-995-8461

Circonscription

1001, boulevard Maisonneuve est, suite 507
Montréal (Québec) H2L 4P9
Tél. : 514-522-1339
Télec. : 514-522-9899

Hélène Laverdière

Députée / Member of Parliament
Laurier—Sainte-Marie / Laurier—Sainte-Marie
Helene.Laverdiere@parl.gc.ca

Constituency

1001 Maisonneuve Blvd East, suite 507
Montréal, Quebec H2L 4P9
Tel.: 514-522-1339
Fax.: 514-522-9899

Hon. Stéphane Dion
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Global Affairs Canada

July 20, 2016

Dear Minister,

We write to you today concerning deeply distressing reports of the worsening human rights situation in Egypt.

A new report from Amnesty International alleges the Egyptian National Security Agency (NSA) is abducting, torturing and forcibly disappearing people in an effort to intimidate opponents and wipe out peaceful dissent. This report follows many others by respected international human rights groups. It is clear that Egypt is facing a human rights crisis.

Since President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi took office in 2014, Egyptian authorities have effectively banned protests, imprisoned tens of thousands—often after unfair trials—and outlawed the country's largest opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood. Journalists have been put on trial; academics have been imprisoned. Freedom of expression is denied to many. We are deeply concerned by numerous allegations of abuse and torture.

Non-governmental organizations and human rights defenders are also facing a crackdown by Egyptian authorities. This is deeply troubling and recalls the forced closure of the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, Freedom House, the International Center for Journalists and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Egypt in 2013. Human rights defenders must be protected; Canada has a role to play in ensuring this.

Minister, we have been contacted by many concerned Canadians regarding the human rights crisis in Egypt following your visit to the country in May 2016. Given the context, it is incumbent upon your government to ensure that human rights are the first issue on the

agenda in your future dealings with the Egyptian government. It is not enough to raise this issue as one of many; it must be your first priority.

We urge you to immediately express Canada's objections to human rights violations perpetrated by Egyptian authorities - violations which are being committed under the false pretext of security and counter-terrorism. Canada must use its influence to pressure Egypt to comply with international human rights standards.

We note also our continued hope that Canada will do everything in its power to ensure Khaled al-Qazzaz, Sarah Attia, and their four Canadian children return to Canada.

We look forward to your timely response to this letter.

Sincerely,



Hélène Laverdière, MP
NDP Foreign Affairs Critic
Vice Chair, House of Commons Standing
Committee on Foreign Affairs and
International Development



Cheryl Hardcastle, MP
Vice Chair, House of Commons Subcommittee
on International Human Rights