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To the Members of the Supreme State Security Prosecution in the Arab Republic of Egypt:

We write as the elected leaders of the Law & Society Association to express serious concern about the arrest of Waleed Salem in Cairo, on May 23, 2018. Mr. Salem is an advanced graduate student working on his Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Washington (Seattle, WA USA). We understand that Mr. Salem was detained while interviewing judges and lawyers for his dissertation which traces the development of the Egyptian judiciary since World War II and that Mr. Salem was charged with terrorism-related offenses and disseminating false information. Mr. Salem is preparing for a career in academic life and his work in Egypt involves the pursuit of scholarly knowledge. We respectfully urge you to release Mr. Salem and to dismiss all charges against him.

The Law & Society Association is a U.S.-based professional association of multi-disciplinary scholars in law schools and social science departments who focus in their research and teaching on how law and legal institutions work in practice rather than on “the books.” Based in the U.S., the LSA is international in its membership and activity. Nearly half of its members and conference participants are from outside the U.S., with scholars from Asia, Europe, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East, including Egypt. The LSA is committed to understanding law in context and to promoting academic freedom and freedom of expression in North America and around the world.

Mr. Salem’s dissertation topic is very much at the heart of the law and society tradition. He seeks to understand the roles and practices of Egypt’s judicial institutions since World War II. By comparing the practices of Egyptian legal actors to those in other countries, Mr. Salem aims to contribute to general theory building about how courts act as partners in governance. The type of research undertaken by Mr. Salem involves meetings with judges, lawyers and legal experts, as well as the systematic study of media coverage, archival resources, and secondary work by other scholars. His research design follows established academic protocols and standards of impartial knowledge production; those who are supervising his work attest that he is not motivated by normative commitments or partisan political allegiances. Mr. Salem’s dissertation work has been praised by his mentors and by many scholars in the fields of socio-legal studies and social science.

Egypt has much to be proud of in its legal history and we hope that scholars will continue to be able to bring research about the Egyptian judiciary to the global academic community. The fact that Egypt’s civil code and history of innovative jurisprudential thought are influential in many Arab countries makes



scholarly research – including the research of Mr. Salem -- important to scholars within the Middle East and, indeed, around the globe. Mr. Salem's detention is of course particularly disturbing to all those who know him as a responsible scholar, but his detention also has broader effects. It sends an unwelcome signal to all those who want to see Egypt maintain its position as an important country in the study of comparative law.

Given the importance of Mr. Salem's work for the study of comparative judicial systems and the need to ensure that scholarly work on Egypt continues to be done, we respectfully request that you release Waleed Salem. We look forward to his return to his scholarly community in socio-legal studies.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Lane Scheppele', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kim Lane Scheppele  
President, Law and Society Association

On behalf of the Board of Trustees