



# Universities Without Academic Freedoms

A Report On Freedom Of Teaching And Research In Egyptian Universities

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## Methodology

This report is based on published news, information, and articles about Freedom of Teaching/Research violations in Egyptian universities. It relies on four testimonies of faculty members affiliated to several private/public universities, collected by AFTE's researcher via phone and email interviews.<sup>1</sup> The report reviews the Freedom of Teaching/Research situation during the period from 2013 till 2019.

## Introduction

AFTE believes that scientific research is one of the essential roles of academic institutions besides teaching and community-serving purposes, in addition to its contribution to policy-making processes and addressing the societal crises. Breaching the freedom of research and teaching limits the faculty members' competencies to fulfill their job in imparting knowledge and developing scientific research. Accordingly, this could hinder the ability of the faculty members and academic institutions as a whole to, effectively, participate in achieving social development.

This is what Prof. Mona Waly<sup>2</sup> says, as she confirms that the freedom of scientific research is a vital basis for any academic institution to provide high-quality teaching. Adding that the absence of teaching/research freedom considerably affects knowledge production quality in the Arab region, which in turn misleads the trajectories of social and economic development.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, this report gives a glimpse into the Academic Freedom situation in Egypt, which has notably deteriorated during the last six years due to the hostile policies of the current political regime against freedom of expression in general. This has also led to increasing self-censorship among citizens, including the academic community, which negatively affected scientific research quality.

The report concentrates on a particular pattern of violations against Academic Freedom that faces the Egyptian/foreign researchers and faculty members in the private/public universities in Egypt. This pattern is about imposing arbitrary restrictions, by universities' administrations or the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR), on the academic community's right to teach and research freely.

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1. Some interviewees requested anonymity by using pseudonyms for personal security considerations.

2. Pseudonym name.

3. AFTE, An interview with Prof. Mona Waly (pseudonym), a faculty member of Cairo University, April 5, 2020.

It reviews the most notable cases of violating Freedom of Teaching/Research in Egyptian universities by analyzing published news and stories on faculty members subjected to administrative investigations because of addressing particular political issues in their teaching and research activities. The cases discussed in this report are indicative examples for the actual reality of the state of research/teaching freedom and Academic Freedom in Egyptian public universities, but not limited to all violations that occurred during the covered period. According to the conducted interviews, many faculty members who experienced similar breaches declined to speak up, fearing to suffer punitive legal or administrative measures.

Increasingly, there have been restrictive practices and arbitrary decisions since 2013, the year which witnessed several cases of rejecting theses and dissertations. The report sheds light on several directives issued by MHESR to impose restrictions on addressing any issues related to sex or religion under the pretext of contradicting the universities' moralities and conventions. Such directives are blunt violations against Freedom of Teaching/Research and unjustified interference in the universities' affairs that breaches its independence.

## First; Writing off Theses Due to Political Reservations

In their Statement on Academic Freedom, the Global Colloquium of University Presidents define the Academic Freedom as “*the freedom to conduct research, teach, speak, and publish, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, wherever the search for truth and understanding may lead*”

In October 2015(4)<sup>4</sup>, Al-Azhar University canceled a defense session of a doctoral thesis about the Islamic jurisprudential characterization of revolutions. It compelled the Ph.D. student, a researcher at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, to rewrite another thesis after changing the subject. Also, the university administration referred the academic supervisors to an administrative investigation, among them the Professor of Comparative Islamic Jurisprudence, Soad Saleh. The Adviser to President of Al-Azhar University for Graduate Studies, Prof. Tawfeeq Noor El-deen, said that writing off the dissertation was because it addresses a provocative, inappropriate topic considering the country’s sensitive situation.<sup>5</sup>

In 2014, Al-Azhar University suspended<sup>6</sup> granting a Ph. D. degree to a researcher at Islamic Dawaa College. It referred the defense committee to an administrative investigation because he described the June 30 event as a military coup in his dissertation. Also, Al-Azhar University changed the titles of several theses because “they are not consistent with Al-Azhar’s moderate thoughts and threatening the national unity”<sup>7</sup>

At the end of December 2015<sup>8</sup>, several newspapers published stories on decisions issued by Suez Canal University to write off two theses in political science. The first thesis addressed “Democracy between theory and practice in Muslim Brotherhood and Salafist groups” through an analytical study of Freedom and Justice Party and Al-Nour Party. The second addressed “the Muslim Brotherhood and Parliament elections in 2005”. The news quoted statements by officials of Suez Canal University saying that the decisions were because the two theses contradict the state’s public order and the judicial rulings. The decisions also suspended the academic supervisor and referred him to an administrative investigation.

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4. Abd-Elsalam, Mohamad. Academic Freedom Newsletter, Volume 2, AFTE, Published on November 7, 2015. Access Date: May 10, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/38EEqZg>

5. Ibid.

6. Ali, Mahmoud. “Cancellation Of Ph.D. Defense And Referring The Supervisors To Investigation”, Masrawy, Published on October 29, 2015. Access Date: May 10, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Yl8B5I>

7. Ibid.

8. Waheed, Walaa. “Suez Canal University Wrote Off Two Theses On Muslim Brotherhood”, Al-Wafd Newspaper, Published on December 2, 2015. Access Date: May 10, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3evxXUo>

Prof. Nahid Mostafa, the Adviser to President of Suez Canal University for Graduate Studies, stated that the first thesis was a Ph.D. dissertation submitted by a Palestinian student to the Political Science Department in the Faculty of Commerce. This was after a recommendation by the Tripartite Committee, which confirmed that the research topic contradicts the state's public order. Regarding the second thesis, Prof. Mostafa added that it was a MA degree thesis submitted by an Egyptian female student, and it was written off because it is politically biased against the Egyptian state. She explained that the reason for canceling is that the thesis content conflicts with final court rulings considering the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist group, which undermines the rule of law principles. She also pointed out that the university's decision included suspending the primary supervisor of the two theses from teaching in postgraduate and undergraduate studies and referring him to administrative investigation according to the faculty council's memo.

The incidents above are a few examples of restrictions imposed on research activities that affect graduate students and faculty members. Such restrictions have resulted in a significant increase in self-censorship attitude for students and professors alike.

The more restrictions they face, the more cautious they are in choosing the topics they discuss in lectures or even the topics that postgraduate students work on for their theses.

Prof. Mona Waly said<sup>9</sup> that she practices self-censorship on herself and her students, before determining any research subject; they assess the objections that it may face. For instance, if a student wants to study a political group that is banned nowadays or a cultural movement that is restricted, the research approval becomes harder as the professors fear that the students may face security investigations. Such self-censorship attitude only developed during the last five years, according to Waly.

On March 9, 2019, Omnia Mohamad Abd-Allah, a Media student in Ain Shams University, was stunned that the teaching assistant, responsible for supervising her graduation project, rejected her interview with George Ishak, the member of the National Council for Human Rights. Omnia stated in her testimony to AFTE<sup>10</sup>, "I interviewed Ishak to discuss enforced disappearance, the prison situation, and the impact of such issues on Egyptian youth's attitude towards the political regime. I proposed the interview points to the supervising faculty members, and they approved them before conducting the interview."

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9. AFTE, an interview with Prof. Mona Waly (pseudonym), a faculty member of Cairo University, April 5, 2020.

10. AFTE, A testimony of Omnia Mohamad Abd-Allah, an undergraduate student in the fourth year of the Faculty of Arts- Media Department, Ain Shams University.

Although it was approved before, the supervising faculty member refused to publish the interview after saying, “I think it contradicts the editorial policy of the graduation project outlet.” Omnia added, “There were not any comments regarding the editorial policies before. The supervising faculty member threatened to refer me to an investigation because of what I wrote about the incident on my Facebook account. Another faculty member advised me to apologize to the supervisor under a promise that they will reconsider publishing the interview. However, they rejected it again, commenting that the interview didn’t criticize the National Council’s performance”.

Eventually, Omnia was informed to choose whether to remove some paragraphs and redo the interview with different questions dictated by the supervisors or to get the graduation grades without publishing the interview in the graduation magazine, which is distributed among journalists and students in the graduation ceremony.

Omnia concluded, “I agreed on not publishing in exchange for getting my grades because I feared to fail my graduation or facing investigation. After that, I knew that some of my colleagues experienced similar situations regarding choosing their topics. They were forced to change them to other topics, but they didn’t speak up what happened to them under the fear of failing graduation.”

These incidents do not represent all obstacles that faculty members and students face regarding their academic activities. Scientific research in Egyptian universities lacks several factors that boost its development. Among these factors, the freedom of access to information and databases needed for conducting scientific research, and the free access to the national archives. Freedom of Information is essential for scientific research and academic freedom in general.

Emad Abo Ghazy, the professor in Cairo University, said<sup>11</sup> that there have been constant restrictions on scientific research for many years. Such as Freedom of Information crisis and restrictions on conducting surveys, collecting data, or accessing archives. These restrictions have increased in recent years, for instance, permission to access national archives takes months instead of a few days, and in some cases, it may be rejected. This is a critical obstacle against scientific research in the history and archives field.

Prof. Waly added<sup>12</sup> that graduate students face the lack of scientific resources and textbooks in the universities’ libraries. When they try to purchase those books from online resources, they find several resources inaccessible due to security objections that ban them because they oppose political content. The inaccessibility of scientific resources is a crucial issue regarding conducting sufficient research activities.

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11. AFTE, an interview with Ema d Abo Ghazy on March 14, 2020.

12. AFTE, an interview with Prof. Mona Waly, a faculty member of Cairo University, April 5, 2020.



## Second; Administrative Interferences in Freedom of Teaching/ Research

The political circumstances are one of the factors that affect Academic Freedom. Such an effect could be positive or negative depending on the government's attitude towards promoting Freedom of Thought and Expression in general. It also guarantees the academic's freedom to research and express their professional views and allow the academic community to apply its scientific outcomes in community development.

Hence, the political context in Egypt during the last years is a clear indication of the academic freedom situation. The Egyptian authorities' intimidation against faculty members and researchers has transformed the teaching methods into mere indoctrination. This also has forced the academic community to develop self-censorship practices to avoid addressing any topics that could upset the political regime. The professors, when discussing political issues, give examples of other countries to avoid talking about the Egyptian situation, Prof. Waly said.<sup>13</sup>

In 2014, the president at Suhag University, Nabil Nour El-Deen, referred Prof. Marzooq Adly to an administrative investigation<sup>14</sup>. Prof. Adly, Professor in Media and Journalism, assigned an interactive exam for the students of Public Relations in the Media Department to implement a model of the ongoing Presidential elections, at that time, to present the electoral programs of the candidates Al-Sisi and Hamden Sabahy. The university administration considered this activity a breach of the Supreme Council of Universities and the University Council's instructions regarding not to involve universities in political disputes and not to address the presidential elections by any means.

Also, the Engineering Faculty at Alexandria University referred Haytham Awad, a professor of ecological engineering, to an administrative investigation<sup>15</sup> because he mentioned Tiran Island as an Egyptian land in one of his exam questions to the students of the Civil Engineering Department. The question was as follows;

The Egyptian-Saudi summit in April 2016 announced a giant project to connect the two states through a bridge passing through the Strait of Tiran, to link between Sharm El Sheikh and the Egyptian island of Tiran, and from there to the territory of the Saudi Kingdom. Discuss all four alternatives available for this project.

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13.Ibid.

14. Abo-Khatwa, Islam. "Interrogating A Professor In Suhag University Because Of A Question On Al-Sisi", Veto Gate, Published on May 22, 2014. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3cOxXOH>

15. New Khalij. "an Investigation With A Professor Who Affirms Tiran And Sanafir As Egyptian Islands", Published on June 7, 2016. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://thenewkhalij.news/article/39080>

Prof. Abd-Elaziz Qonswa, the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, formed an urgent committee to investigate the exam question incident. It is worth mentioning that at the time of the exam, the treaty's provisions demarcating the maritime borders with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were not approved constitutionally or judicially. In contrast, there were no similar measures taken against other professors, who mentioned Tiran as a Saudi island, such as the exam questions for the Media students at Al-Azhar University and the students of the Faculty of Education at Alexandria University.

Moving to Damanhour University, a professor at the Faculty of Education was suspended for three months after he was subjected to an administrative investigation<sup>16</sup>. This was because he claimed, in one of his books, that Sheikh Al-Sharawy and the Islamic preacher, Amr Khaled, are charlatans. Prof. Ahmad Mohamad Rashwan mentioned in his book "Studies in Arab's Modern History" that the eras of Al-Sadaat and Mubarak witnessed the rise of the most prominent charlatans in Egypt's modern history, Cheikh Al-Sharawy and Amr Khaled. They contributed to enrich the religious obsession of the Egyptian people and to promote the political Islam ideology. The book was assigned in the course program of the History Department at the Faculty of Education.

The president of Damanhour University, Ebied Saleh, decided to refer Prof. Rashwan to an immediate investigation under accusations of insulting Cheikh Al-Sharawy and Amr Khaled. Prof. Saleh affirmed that the university is not a space for political score-settling, personal opinions, or insulting people, particularly the national symbols.

Also, Prof. Amr Hamroush, the Secretary of the Religious Affairs Committee in the Parliament, condemned Rashwan's book<sup>17</sup>, saying that he will file a request to issue a law to criminalize insulting the national symbols. In addition to demanding the Minister of Higher Education to form a neutral academic committee to review and approve all books assigned for syllabuses to prevent leaking any odd or extremist thoughts to the students, which pose a threat to the Egyptian national security.

From his side, Prof. Rashwan said:<sup>18</sup> "I deleted this chapter, and I didn't assign it for the students. It happened that one of the students read the chapter and showed it to her father, who is Sheikh at Al-Azhar, who called the university president to take the necessary measures. Accordingly, the university president lashed out a media campaign against me and referred me to an immediate investigation, without official notice, before Ashraf Shiha, the Dean Assistant of the Faculty of

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16. Abd-Elhameed, Ashraf. "An Investigation With A University Professor Who Accused Al-Sharawy and Amr Khaled With Charlatanry", Al Arabiya, Published on May 3, 2018. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2yLcfMx>

17. Gouda, Naser. "Details On Accusing The Damanhour University Professor With Insulting Al-Sharawy", Youm7, Published on May 2, 2018. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2I2OBu6>

18. AFTE, an interview with Prof. Ahmad Rashwan, May 15, 2018.

Law at Tanta University, and the legal advisor to the President of Damanhour University. Besides that, the Department Council held a meeting to declare their respect to Al-Azhar and its Sheikhs”.

The previous incident is a clear example that the social context also oppresses research/teaching freedom without any protection for faculty members by the universities’ leadership. The university administration has to guarantee the faculty members freedom to research and teach, as long as they fulfill the required scientific methodologies, but what happened in Damanhour University was that the administration referred Prof. Rashwan to a legal investigation even before checking if the arguments in his controversial book are scientifically valid.

Regarding the pressures on faculty members, Prof. Mostafa Hussien<sup>19</sup>, a seconded professor from Cairo University to one of the American Universities, said that during his work in Cairo University, he faced moral pressures. Such as receiving oral warnings from his colleagues to limit his media appearance, because it negatively affects his academic career, some of them advised him to work in universities abroad. Eventually, Hussein had no choice but to travel to work at an American university because of these relentless pressures, which were creating an inconvenient atmosphere for work, according to Hussien’s description.

Hussien added that these pressures started as friendly advice and ended up being explicit warnings, which was what happened to one of his colleagues when she discussed some issues about the Egyptian Military in a lecture. She received a blunt warning that she shouldn’t do this again. Research and teaching freedom are essential for faculty members. Hussien confirms, “Faculty members have to enjoy absolute freedom to practice their work efficiently, and this matter is more important in teaching social sciences. Sometimes we need to bring examples from our real life, but this is not allowed anymore under relentless instructions of not discussing any topics related to Egyptian politics by any means. Naturally, such a situation affects the students too; they now consider the learning process as a matter of just getting degrees and certificates regardless of gaining knowledge and developing their critical minds. This situation also drains the faculty members’ potentials. Although they were an integral part of Egypt’s decision-making process, regardless of the different political regimes, nowadays, there is no room except for the professors who support the current political administration and promote its policies. Hussien concludes that this atmosphere has led to many scientists and professors’ emigration to work in foreign universities, which is a severe waste of the universities’ human resources.

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19.AFTE, An interview with Prof. Mostafa Hussien (pseudonym), March 13, 2020.

### Third; Ministry of High Education Interferences in Freedom of Teaching/Research

The Ministry of High Education interference is clear evidence on violations and restrictions of the Freedom of Teaching/Research. For instance, the Minister of Higher Education's objection to one of the exam questions for law school students addressing the statement<sup>20</sup> by the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces on removing the former President, Mohamad Morsy. Or the Minister's directives asking private universities to clear all syllabus from any misrepresentations of societies, countries, or individuals in any of the friendly countries.

Such interferences are considered a blunt violation of Academic Freedom and University Autonomy and a relentless attempt to isolate the universities from the Egyptian public sphere in order not to have any role in enriching the public debates on issues of concern to Egyptian society, and not to contribute to the community development intellectually, economically, politically and culturally.

In this context, Mona Waly, a professor at Cairo University, said that they received a directive, more than once, saying that it's prohibited to address particular topics by teaching or research. The first directive was two years ago, stating that it is not allowed to discuss politics in lectures, without any clear definition of politics. Any topic could be considered "political". This directive was sent to all the university faculties, including the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, which mainly studies politics.

The second directive was during the Tiran and Sanafir crisis; it instructed to avoid addressing any issues related to Egypt's borders topic. Apparently, the actual instruction is not to discuss Tiran and Sanafir's crisis.<sup>21</sup>

Emad Abo Ghazy, the full professor of the Archives Department at Cairo University, mentioned<sup>22</sup> another directive issued in 2018 by MHESR, saying that it is not allowed to bring up religious or political issues in the exam questions or the content of the courses. The faculty members objected to this directive, and no one committed to it because most of the faculties of social sciences have to address issues related, directly or indirectly, to politics and religion. Besides, according to his description, no party has followed up on the implementation of this impossible directive.

The MHESR's interferences have varied from directives on the teaching content to the scientific research and theses topics.

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20. Statement of July 3, 2013.

21. AFTE, an interview with Prof. Mostafa Hussien (pseudonym), March 13, 2020.

22. AFTE, an interview with Emad Abo Ghazy on March 14, 2020.

For instance, on October 15, 2016, the Minister of Higher Education sent a directive<sup>23</sup> to the Secretary of the Council of Private Universities, including instruction on removing all the teaching content that includes any misrepresentations of societies, countries, or individuals in any of the friendly countries. This directive was after a defense session of a thesis which the Minister of Higher Education considered as containing offensive content against a public figure from a friendly country.

Also, on January 5, 2016, the Minister of Higher Education asked<sup>24</sup> the president of Cairo University, Prof. Gaber Nassar, to open an administrative investigation with Rafaat Fouda, the professor of the General Law in law school. Fouda put an exam question discussing the removal of the elected president Mohamed Morsi by the statement of the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces on July 3, 2013.

The question was in the Administrative Law course exam for the students of the General Law diploma. The Minister considered that the question implies unfavorable thoughts, which required referring the responsible professor to an administrative investigation.<sup>25</sup> Then, on January 28, 2016, the Assistant Dean of law school announced that the General Law Department's Council presented a report regarding the question at issue, which concluded that the question is scientifically related to the course content. It was merely a legal question, not including any political implications, to discuss the legitimacy of the July 3 statement.

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23.Abd-Elsalam, Mohamad. Academic Freedom Newsletter, Volume 6, AFTE, Published on January 19, 2017. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2I7FpGC>

24.EL-Shafi, Abd-Allah. "An Investigation with a University Professor Who Questioned Al-Sisi's Legality", Shababik, Published on January 5, 2016. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2WVLCpt>

25.Ibid.

## Fourth; Moral Objections and Restrictions on Personal Freedoms

The restrictions on teaching/research freedom in private and public Egyptian universities are not only limited to political reasons, but also to sex and religious issues besides judging personal behaviors under the pretext of preserving the university's customs and traditions. These restrictions cannot be considered as a distinctive pattern of violations of freedom of research and teaching regarding the period covered by the report (2013-2019) but rather a pattern that is frequent and accustomed for many years before this period.

In August 2016, Tarek Abo-Elnaga, the Architecture professor at the German University, was stunned by terminating his contract. Media reports<sup>26</sup> mentioned the termination was because the university and some students' parents had reservations on the content of the graduation projects that Abo-Elnaga supervised. The graduation projects discussed the nudity in human history and the feminine divinity across civilizations. Earlier, the university's security guards removed illustrative banners of two students from the graduation projects gallery. AFTE had reached out to Prof. Abo-Elnaga for clarification<sup>27</sup>; he stated that the university didn't mention the reason for the contract termination. The university administration didn't only cancel the controversial graduation projects, but also ended the contract with the professor responsible for them, as a punishment for his support of the students' freedom to research.

In Al-Azhar University, the professor at the Faculty of Theology, Yousry Gaafar, was suspended<sup>28</sup> for three months under accusations of atheism and attempting to revive Muhammad Abdo's and Taha Hussein's thoughts, and attacking the Islamic ideology, describing it as an obscurantist ideology, according to Al Watan News.<sup>29</sup>

Al-Azhar University formed an investigation committee that interrogated Gaffar about his lectures' content, his opinions, and his views on Al-Azhar institution. Then the committee accused him of atheism, criticizing Al-Bokhary in his lectures and calling for amending Al-Azhar's curriculums. Gaffar denied all these accusations confirming that he is calling for the enlightenment. Sources

26. Abd-Algalil, Tarek. "Egypt: Academic Freedom At Risk Again", Al-FanarMedia, Published on September 12, 2016. Access Date: May 13, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3er0gmM>

27. Abd-Elsalam, Mohamad. Academic Freedom Newsletter, Volume 6, AFTE, Published on January 19, 2017. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2I7FpGC>

28. Ahmad, Abd-El-Rahman. "Al-Azhar Professor YousryGafaar: My suspension Is Score-Settling", Published on November 1, 2016. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3eqjhWv>

29. Al-Khateeb, Ahmad. "Al-Azhar Suspended A Theology Professor Under Accusations Of Atheism", Al-Watan News, Published on November 1, 2016. Access Date: June 23, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/2Yry65s>

inside Al-Azhar mentioned that there is an intention to dismiss Gaffar if he speaks to the media because, in that case, Al-Azhar will be accused of holding an inquisition.

Also, on June 13, 2018, Al-Azhar University suspended<sup>30</sup> another professor for three months and referred him to an administrative investigation under accusations of following Shia Jurisprudence. According to Al-Azhar's statement, Prof. Mohamad Gamal Saeed Abd-Elghany is affiliated with the Shiite group, Al-Ahmadia Al-Katyanii, which has already been considered apostates of the Islamic religion. So, Abd-Elghany was suspended to protect students from such deviant thoughts.

Moving to Suez University<sup>31</sup>, the university president, Al-Sayed Al Sharkawy, issued a decision to dismiss Prof. Mona Al-Prince while retaining her pension, following the disciplinary board's recommendation issued on May 13, 2018.

On April 5, 2017, Suez University referred Al-Prince to an administrative investigation and decided to suspend her till the end of the investigation. In its statement, the university administration said that Al-Prince posted videos and photos on social media, which are considered offensive to public decency, she didn't commit to the assigned curriculums, and appeared in the media without prior permission by the university. Also, she made statements contrary to the university's tradition, moralities, and public order, and finally, she delays the paperwork.

The former president of Suez University tried to affirm that the decision was not because of her posts on social media, but it was under professional transgressions acts, such as not committing to the lecture frameworks, non-compliance with legal working hours, and other problems of grading the exam papers.

The Ministry of Higher Education released a statement<sup>32</sup> confirming that "the Constitution and Law protect the personal freedoms of the faculty members, but it is not at the expense of the university norms and ethics."

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30. Assabeel, "Egypt: Al-Azhar University Referred A Professor to Investigation under Shiism Accusation", Published on June 13, 2018.

Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3bxv6YU>

31. AFTE. "Oppression with a Taste of Emergency: Report on Freedom of Expression in 2018", Published on Jan 23, 2019. Access Date: May 12, 2020. Retrieved from <shorturl.at/lsGJ1>

32. AFTE. "More Than One Authority of Oppression: Report on Freedom of Expression in 2016", Published on Jan 20, 2016. Access Date: May 13, 2020. Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/316K8Tu>

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The report at hand presented the most significant violations and restrictions against teaching/research freedom in Egyptian public and private universities during the period from 2013 to 2019. This period had witnessed a notable increase in the numbers and the nature of violations, either by universities' administrations or by the Ministry of Higher Education, against graduate students, academic researchers, and faculty members.

AFTE believes that the continuation of such violations means draining the University of its competent human resources, as they escape from the suffocating atmosphere of academic life in Egyptian universities. Also, it leads to the deterioration of the scientific research, inadequate knowledge production, and the inability of the academic community to apply scientific outcomes in community development.

AFTE calls upon the Ministry of Higher Education, the Supreme Council for Universities, and the universities administrations to abide by the following;

- **The immediate cessation of all interferences and directives regarding the content of scientific theses, research, and studies, while guaranteeing absolute freedom for researchers, professors, and graduate students in choosing their research subjects without political, moral or religious restrictions.**
- **Universities administrations have to stop interfering in the faculty members' right to freely choose their subjects of research, teaching, and linking the teaching content with the real Egyptian context.**
- **The immediate cessation of all interferences and directives by the Ministry of Higher Education regarding the curriculums' content and research subjects because this is considered a blunt violation of Academic Freedom and University Autonomy.**
- **Stop referring faculty members to administrative investigations under the pretext of breaching the university's norms and traditions, and to also stop interfering in the personal behavior and lifestyle of the faculty members, or inspecting their political/religious attitudes.**