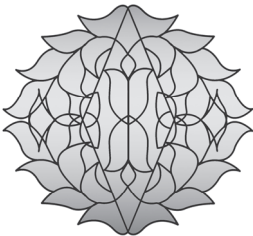


**Middle
East
Studies
Association**
of North America, Inc.

1219 N Santa Rita Ave
The University of Arizona
Tucson AZ 85721 USA

520 621-5850
520 626-9095 fax
mesana@u.arizona.edu
www.mesana.org



MESA '09

21 September 2009

Dr. Ebrahim Ahmed Aljanahi
President, University of Bahrain
Fax: +973 1744 9900

Dear Dr. Aljanahi:

On behalf of the Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) of the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA), I am writing to you to express our concern at the disciplinary action taken against Ms. Noor Abbas, a student at the University of Bahrain. Earlier this year, Ms. Abbas circulated a statement on behalf of the Student Union List criticizing some policies and facilities at the University.

MESA was founded in 1966 to promote scholarship and teaching on the Middle East and North Africa. The preeminent organization in the field, the Association publishes the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and has more than 3000 members worldwide. MESA is committed to ensuring academic freedom and freedom of expression, both within the region and in connection with the study of the region in North America and elsewhere.

Universities, their administrators, and their faculty, have a special obligation to encourage free inquiry and discussion on their campuses. We should lead by example. CAF, a committee composed primarily of university faculty members (many with administrative experience), therefore strongly urges your university to reconsider the disciplinary action you have taken in this case. The statement circulated by Ms. Abbas, while critical of some University policies, was well within the bounds of reasoned discourse. It would seem to be more worthy of a reasoned than a punitive response. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Virginia H. Aksan
MESA President
Professor of History, McMaster University

cc:

Dr. Majed Ali Al-Nuaimi
Minister of Education and President, Board of Trustees of the University of Bahrain
Fax: +973 1768 0161, 1768 4493
Email: info@batelco.com.bh, akhbar-alterbia@maktoob.com

Her Excellency Houda Ezra Ebrahim Nonoo
Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain, Washington, DC 20008
Fax: 202 362 2192

Mr. Nabeel Rajab
President, Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Manama, Bahrain
Fax: +97 31 7795170