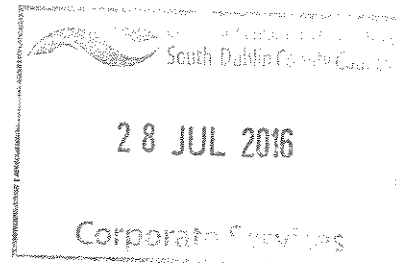




Mr. Tom O'Neill
Meeting Administrator
South Dublin County Council
County Hall, Tallagh
Dublin 24

26 July 2016

Our Ref: CON0160168
Your Ref: M13/0716



Dear Mr. O'Neill,

I refer to your recent correspondence to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Mr. Charles Flanagan T.D., who has asked me to respond on his behalf.

At the outset, the Minister has asked me to assure you that securing Ibrahim Halawa's return home to Ireland has been and continues to be a top priority for the Government. You will appreciate that as this is an ongoing case, there is a limit to the information I can disclose publicly. However, I can assure you that the approach to this case is under continuous review and that it is informed and shaped by, *inter alia*, constant coordination and dialogue with Ibrahim's family and his legal representatives, by the experience and expertise of Department officials, by our consultations with other States who have had citizens in similar situations, and by advice from legal and human rights experts with knowledge of Egypt.

Regardless of our difficulties with the trial, the reality is that the Irish Government cannot directly interfere with a criminal trial in another jurisdiction. As a Government, what we can do - and what we are working very hard to do - is to apply maximum pressure on the Egyptian Government as a means of working to achieve his release at the earliest possible time, and to provide all consular care possible to Ibrahim while he remains in prison.

All of the sustained and focused actions that have been taken by the Government, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and our Embassy in Cairo throughout this case have been aimed at furthering these two objectives, and importantly, avoiding any action that could be counterproductive or detrimental to Mr. Halawa's interest.

In this regard, we have proactively used all the diplomatic tools that are available to us to ensure that the Egyptian Government at the highest levels fully understand the importance that the Irish Government attaches to the resolution of this case. The Government is continuing to pursue every constructive avenue to secure the release of Ibrahim Halawa and we will continue to bring all of our influence to bear on his behalf through all effective channels.

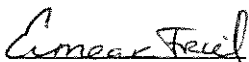
Minister Flanagan is in regular contact with his Egyptian counterpart, Minister Shoukry, making clear the Irish Government's concerns and objectives in this case. Minister Flanagan was in Cairo on June 16 and raised Ibrahim Halawa's case again on that occasion with Minister Shoukry. The Taoiseach has also raised Mr. Halawa's detention directly and personally with Egyptian President el-Sisi on a number of occasions, most recently in a telephone call with the President on Monday, 4 July. The Egyptian Government is in no doubt about the Irish Government's position and our determination to see Ibrahim released as soon as possible.

In addition to engagement with the Egyptian authorities, the Government has also been engaging on an ongoing basis with other states who have had citizens in similar situation - with our European and international partners represented in Egypt, and with the European Union. Minister Flanagan has engaged extensively with the EU High Representative, Ms. Federica Mogherini, who – at the Minister's request - has personally raised Ibrahim Halawa's case with the Egyptian Government.

Officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, both in Dublin and in Cairo, remain in ongoing contact with the Halawa family. The Government formally supported an application made by Ibrahim Halawa's legal team in 2015 for his return to Ireland under the Presidential Decree 140, and Minister Flanagan has confirmed that the Government will again give full and urgent support to a new Decree 140 application that is currently being finalised by Ibrahim's legal team. We will continue to offer all appropriate support to efforts to secure his release.

The Government will remain resolute in pursuing its clear objectives in this case and what we firmly believe to be in this citizen's best interest and to be most likely to contribute to a positive outcome for him.

Yours sincerely,


Eimear Friel
Private Secretary