

# Elon students abroad in Egypt evacuate safely

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News Editor

In response to the current unrest in Egypt, Elon University students studying abroad at the American University of Cairo have been safely evacuated from the country. According to Paul Geis, assistant director of affiliations and exchanges at the Isabella Cannon International Centre, all of the students are safe and have contacted their families.

Elon canceled its affiliate program at AUC Jan. 30, and of the six students studying in Egypt, five were evacuated together to Istanbul Monday, Jan. 31 by flights organized by the United States government. The sixth evacuated with his family, who was also in Egypt, during the weekend.

According to Geis, the students did not know the evacuation location until they boarded their plane. Flights left as soon as possible to one of three "safe-haven" locations in Istanbul, Athens and Cyprus and flight destinations were determined based on the airport that was able to receive the plane first.

All U.S. citizens evacuated in this manner were required to sign promissory statements ensuring they would pay for the flight at a later date, once the cost was determined. According to the website for the U.S. embassy in Cairo, all evacuated parties will need to make their own lodging arrangements and plans to return to the U.S.

Although the main AUC campus is in the desert, away from the protests in Cairo, Geis said that Zamalek Island, where the students were living, was not isolated.

"Trouble could have easily

spread there," he said, adding that there was a significant concern for the lack of police and the lawlessness that was spreading. "It's absolutely unsafe for students to be at or near the protests."

Geis said the students expressed interest in staying in Cairo, but that if they had chosen to stay, they would have had to continue the semester as non-Elon students.

"Our primary concern absolutely is student safety and well-being," he said. "We would not be able to support them there."

Any classes they would have taken would appear on their transcripts as transfer credits and the grades would not be reflected in their Elon GPAs. Elon-administered financial aid also would not have applied.

Geis would not release the names of the students abroad, but said the five who evacuated to Istanbul will soon head to Israel to start the new semester at the University of Haifa. He said he was not informed of the plans of the sixth student.

There are no current plans to cancel the fall program at AUC, but Geis said the situation will be monitored closely and Elon will not allow students to go if there are safety concerns. He said it is not typical to allow students to apply for multiple programs, but that they are looking into the possibility of allowing students interested in AUC to choose a backup program.

"This is a fluid situation," Geis said. "If someone had called us a week ago, we did not think there would be any issues for fall. This can change as the situation evolves."

He said he expects the decision to be made within the coming days.



BRIAN ALLENBY | Staff Photographer  
During her first and last attempt to vote in Egypt, Elgamal said she was threatened for supporting the opposition and left without casting her ballot.

## Shereen Elgamal on voter fraud in Egypt

"My husband was actually serving the one year that the Muslim Brothers were allowed to run, I think it was '92; my husband was representing one of the candidates in his neighborhood, or in his precinct. And he said 'I sat there and people would come and give their names and we would look for their names and I saw so many deceased relatives. My grandfather had a check mark next to his name; he voted, my uncle, my great uncle, he had a check mark next to his name; he went and voted.' They had died! These people were dead at this time, so he tried to raise this point and the other person said, 'You want to sit here and preserve your well-being, or you want to make noise?' So he said he wanted to sit and observe. They actually undid the tape that was securing the ballot box and started filling out the papers and putting them into the box (unfolded), just throwing them into the box. So he said 'what are you doing, this is totally unacceptable.' He was beaten up really badly and put in jail for this and he was roughed up a little bit in jail and then they usually just let them out because in '92, he was 30 years old. They called it teaching him a lesson. These are the elections. That's why I said when Americans say, 'I didn't vote, or I didn't go or I didn't have time,' I find it very offensive. I find it very, very offensive."

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Audio: Hear Shereen Elgamal share her predictions for Egypt in the coming days.  
<http://bit.ly/Elgamal>

## Protests should not deter study abroad programs in Jordan

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Editor-in-Chief

Elon University students interested in studying abroad in Jordan will still be given the opportunity despite recent protests in the Middle East.

There is not an Elon-sponsored trip to Jordan, but there is a semester-long affiliate program through the Council on International Educational Exchange that students can participate in, said Woody Pelton, dean of International Programs. The program to Amman will begin in fall 2011.

Jordan's King Abdullah II fired his cabinet and named a new prime minister after several anti-government protests in early February. CIEE's website says it is still hosting students and the Amman campus was one of the alternative locations considered by Elon students evacuated from Egypt.

Elon senior Andrew Black went to Amman, Jordan during his spring semester and summer junior year with a different program, AMIDEAST.

"What was unique about the program was you can live with host families," Black said. "So I stayed with a Jordanian family and it was a tremendous experience. You learn things that you never learn in a classroom."

During his seven-month stay, there were protests between a tribe and local police forces around the area. From what Black saw, the monarchy was a unifying presence rather than the source of tension.

Regardless of the protests, Black intends on applying for the Fulbright Program and traveling to Egypt this summer. The protests should not deter students looking to study abroad, he said.

"I mean, obviously you want to plan carefully as not to get interrupted by domestic or international crisis, but I wouldn't discourage those from continuing studying in the Middle East," he said. "It's such a wonderful experience and the people are amazing. It would be a shame to abandon your (study abroad) ambitions all together."

Offering more programs in the Middle East is part of a push from the Isabella Cannon International Centre for students to visit places outside of Europe. For the 2012 Winter Term, a study abroad trip to Turkey, Greece and possibly Morocco is currently in the works.

"We're not exclusively pushing Middle East trips, but (we're) trying to get students to consider places beyond Europe," Felton said. "This is a big world and there's a lot of places. So think about the Middle East, China, India or Africa."

# Egyptians risk lives to fight 'years of oppression'

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are Egyptians currently living in North Carolina, said the violence in Egypt was difficult for her parents. "They're taking it hard," Ataalla said. "We have property in Egypt, family in Egypt."

Ataalla was born in the United States, but she and her family return to Egypt every other summer. She said her family has several houses in different cities in Egypt, including Alexandria, and while she said their property is fine, some of their neighbors' property has been damaged. Some of her male friends have had to act as security guards outside their homes.

"I feel like it's great people are fighting for their rights," Ataalla said. "I'm not liking the ending. I like how it started."

Ataalla said many of her Egyptian friends are pro-Mubarak and those that are not did not participate in the protests. She said the first protests, which were peaceful, started as "educational." Now, she said, the toll the riots have taken is too great.

"The people don't know how to deal with each other now," she said. "There's too much fighting going on in the Egyptian race. It's very sad to see."

Elgamal, however, said people need to continue with the resistance.

"People need to continue to die, actually, in the thousands," she said. "So that at least they would leave behind the legacy of a huge smear on this system. The system that is sacrificing thousands for one person who is in the eyes of many, useless, and in the eyes of some others, valuable, depending on who's looking at it."

Elgamal said the protests turned violent when policemen in street clothes went into crowds and instigated fights in order to have reason for retaliation against otherwise peaceful demonstrators.

According to Elgamal, her brother-in-law, Mahmoud Abouzeid, is still awaiting arrest at his home. Abouzeid is on the advisory council of the Muslim Brotherhood, a banned party that Elgamal said is moderate and

represents about one-third of Egyptians.

Elgamal said Abouzeid was taken from his house at 3:30 a.m. Jan. 27, just after the protests started picking up momentum, but was freed when a prison break-out was staged by the police.

"Another technique the police use lately is to free the prisoners, set the facility on fire and claim the prisoners had an uprising or something," Elgamal said.

While Abouzeid returned to his home, she said she is sure he will be apprehended again.

Elgamal said when Abouzeid was taken into custody, the police turned the house upside down before taking him away.

"It is not enough that they take my husband," Elgamal said, quoting her sister's account of his arrest. "They take the car. Anything that has value, computers, cell phones. If you have \$5 in a drawer, it is gone. If you have a ring or a nice necklace, nothing. Nothing stays."

Senior Sheehan Kane, who studied at the American University of Cairo in both the spring and fall of 2010, said she always felt most uneasy around the police when she was walking through the streets of Cairo.

"They're the ones who harass you, as girls," Kane said. "The police are the ones who will harass you on the street and whistle at you and try to talk to you. It's very weird."

Senior Molly Harmen, who also studied at AUC last fall, said she felt the same way.

"I feel like if there was a real emergency, I don't think they'd help me out," she said.

While Elon canceled its spring AUC program and most of the Elon students planning to study in Cairo will be studying at the University of Haifa instead, Harmen said she has heard from friends at AUC that many of the other American students seemed to be staying put.

"Some are just really worried about what's going on," she said. "I guess it's harder because a lot of the Egyptians who go to AUC are from a very wealthy part of society, so there are a lot of mixed feelings about what's going on."

Although Ataalla said her parents are pro-Mubarak,

**"The Muslim Brotherhood is an Islamic collective organization, and its members belong to the Egyptian society; they... call on all citizens of Muslims and non-Muslims to cooperate in the good, to achieve justice, to lay the foundations of the right and to put the interest of the nation before the personal interest. They call on all to unite against injustices and corruption, effectively and peacefully without causing any damage to any public and private properties. They stress the importance of the cooperation between all political and partisan forces to maintain a unified national stance."**

-Muslim Brotherhood's official English website

she said she is unsure of her position.

"I'm conflicted," she said. "My dad loves him, he's very pro-Mubarak... but I feel like (Mubarak) knew all this would happen and he let it happen."

Ataalla said she thought the protests started going too far when clashes between pro- and anti-Mubarak forces became violent and the numbers of dead and severely injured people began to rise steadily.

Elgamal said the group of anti-Mubarak protesters is composed of people who are willing to die in order to instigate change.

"Some of them are people like me," she said. "Or people who think that if we can't live with liberty and justice, it is not a bad thing to die after all."

She said many of the protesters she saw interviewed on TV echoed similar sentiments of feeling as though they had no futures or promise in life, and many were unable to support their families.

"Blood is really inexpensive," she said. "There is no value to human life in the system, the Mubarak system. There is absolutely no value."