



**ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT
MINISTRY OF ANTIQUITIES
OFFICE OF THE MINISTER**

PRESS RELEASE

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From: Office of Dr. Zahi Hawass, Minister of Antiquities

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Contact: The SCA Press Office: sca3press@gmail.com or +20 (0)2 2735 3964; Also visit: www.sca-egypt.org/eng/MR_PR.htm.

Again, I want to tell everyone that all the fights and fires in Tahrir Square that many people saw on television yesterday did not affect the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, at all. There were rumors that began last night that claimed the museum was on fire. I was in contact with the control room of the museum all throughout the night. The cameras of the control room can see outside of the museum into the gardens and also outside of the surrounding walls. When some people saw a car burning, they started to say that the museum was burning as well. The people spreading these rumors are idiots, because, as I have been saying in each of my statements, if the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, is safe, Egypt is safe. If there was a fire near the museum, I have the fire department located outside of the museum, and they could quickly control and put out any fire.

Again, I am the only source of continuing truth concerning antiquities, and these rumors are aimed at making the Egyptian people look bad. If anything happens to the museum, I would bravely tell everyone all over the world because I am a man of honor, and I would never hide anything from you. It is from my heart that I tell people everywhere that I am the guardian of these monuments that belong to the whole world.

The Gezira television station has reported that the monuments of Saqqara have been damaged and items were stolen- this is not true. The army is in charge of guarding the site; I called the general there 5 minutes ago (it is now 10:30 am on February 3, 2011), and he informed me that Saqqara is safe and all the monuments are fine; nothing is damaged or stolen. The site of Lisht has excavations run by Dieter Arnold of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The guards of the Lisht monuments called Dieter two days ago to reassure him that they were doing a good job of guarding the site. I want Dieter to know that Lisht is safe and will remain safe.

If anything happens I will announce it. I want people to know that only two things have happened so far: 1) The break-in at the Egyptian Museum, Cairo, resulting in 70 broken objects, all of which can and will be restored, and 2) The break-in at the storage magazine at Qantara, in the Sinai. We do not know exactly how many objects were stolen from this magazine, but a total of 6 boxes were taken. All of these objects came from excavations or were being stored there from the Port Said Museum. As of today, 288 objects have been returned, and I am sure that any other artifacts still missing from this magazine will be returned.

I want everyone to relax, and know that I am here and we are all watching with open eyes. I want people to know that after 9 days of protests, the monuments are safe. Why? Because the Egyptian people are protecting them.