



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT *of* NEW YORK

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Southern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 6, 2022

## **Manhattan Man Arrested For Acting As An Unregistered Agent Of The Egyptian Government In The United States**

Damian Williams, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Matthew G. Olsen, the Assistant Attorney General for National Security, and Michael J. Driscoll, the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Field Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), announced today the unsealing of an indictment charging PIERRE GIRGIS, a dual Egyptian and U.S. citizen, with acting and conspiring to act in the United States as an unregistered agent of the Arab Republic of Egypt. GIRGIS was taken into custody earlier today, and will be presented this afternoon before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert W. Lehrburger.

U.S. Attorney Damian Williams said: "As alleged, Pierre Girgis failed to meet his requirements to register as a foreign agent in the United States. At the behest of Egyptian officials, Girgis's alleged prohibited conduct included attempting to covertly gather non-public intelligence about the activities of political opponents of Egypt's president, and attempting to gain access for foreign officials to attend law enforcement-only trainings in Manhattan. This Office will continue to strictly enforce foreign agent registration laws, which remain critically important to ensuring that our government is not secretly influenced by foreign governments."

Assistant Attorney General Matthew G. Olsen said: "The Department of Justice will not allow agents of foreign governments to operate in the United States to pursue and collect information about critics of those governments. Working at the direction of the Egyptian government, Girgis agreed to target its perceived critics located in the United States. This indictment begins the process of holding him accountable for his actions in contravention of our laws and values."

FBI Assistant Director-in-Charge Michael J. Driscoll said: "Agents of foreign countries are required to register with our government for a good reason - they often act in their home country's interests and against those of the United States. We allege Mr. Girgis sent non-public information back to Egypt for the benefit of the Egyptian government. Mr. Girgis broke our laws, and we must hold him accountable."

According to the allegations contained in the indictment unsealed today in Manhattan federal court, and statements made during court proceedings[1]:

From at least approximately 2014 to 2019, GIRGIS, a native of Egypt, acted in the United States as an agent of the Egyptian government, without notifying the U.S. Attorney General as required by law. GIRGIS operated at the direction and control of multiple officials of the Egyptian government in an effort to further the

interests of the Egyptian government in the United States. Among other things, at the direction of Egyptian government officials, GIRGIS tracked and obtained information regarding political opponents of Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. GIRGIS also leveraged his connections with local U.S. law enforcement officers to collect non-public information at the direction of Egyptian officials, arranged benefits for Egyptian officials who were visiting Manhattan, and coordinated meetings between U.S. and Egyptian law enforcement in the United States, including by attempting to arrange for Egyptian officials to attend police trainings.

On or about May 7, 2018, GIRGIS discussed his status as an agent of the Egyptian government with an Egyptian official (“Egyptian Official-1”) using an encrypted messaging application. During the conversation, Egyptian Official-1 expressed frustration that GIRGIS had communicated with personnel from a different Egyptian government agency, warned GIRGIS that “it is not possible to open with all the agencies,” and stated that Egyptian Official-1 was “letting you [GIRGIS] open with us only.”<sup>[2]</sup> Later in the encrypted messaging exchange, Egyptian Official-1 advised GIRGIS that other Egyptian government agencies “want sources for themselves, and you [GIRGIS] have become an important source for them to collect information.” GIRGIS responded, “I know and I see and I learn from you,” and then informed Egyptian Official-1, “it will not be repeated again.”

Approximately one year later, on or about March 8, 2019, in the course of GIRGIS’s continuing operations as an Egyptian agent, GIRGIS and Egyptian Official-1 discussed an upcoming trip of certain Egyptian officials to the United States. During that telephone conversation, GIRGIS stated, “Tell me what you want me to do,” and Egyptian Official-1 responded by inquiring about GIRGIS’s relationship with a particular U.S. law enforcement officer. Egyptian Official-1 then instructed GIRGIS “to ask [the U.S. law enforcement officer] for something. We want you to find out if there are any police trainings happening in Manhattan in the coming days, and if so, who are the people in charge of these trainings? We would like to attend.” Later in the conversation, GIRGIS again asked, “What you want me to do?” Egyptian Official-1 directed GIRGIS, “Make follow up, Ok?” and GIRGIS agreed by responding, “Ok.”

\* \* \*

GIRGIS, 39, is a resident of Manhattan. GIRGIS is charged with one count of conspiring to act as an agent of a foreign government without notifying the Attorney General, which carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison, and one count of acting as an agent of a foreign government without notifying the Attorney General, which carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. The maximum potential sentences are prescribed by Congress and are provided here for informational purposes only, as any sentencing of the defendant will be determined by a judge.

Mr. Williams praised the outstanding investigative work of the FBI and its New York Field Office, Counterintelligence Division, and thanked the Department of Justice’s National Security Division, Counterintelligence and Export Control Section, for their assistance.

The case is being handled by the Office’s National Security and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys Elinor L. Tarlow and Kyle A. Wirshba are in charge of the case, with assistance from Trial Attorney Scott Claffee of the Counterintelligence and Export Control Section.

The charges in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

[1] As the introductory phrase signifies, the Indictment, and the description of the Indictment set forth herein, constitute only allegations, and every fact described should be treated as an allegation.

[2] The statements described in the Indictment and herein are set forth in substance and in part.

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**Attachment(s):**

[Download u.s. v. pierre girgis indictment sealed.pdf](#)

**Component(s):**

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