



## **CEDEJ Tuesday Seminar**

### **The Egyptian Medical Aid Committee and its role in the Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-1936)**

**By Shaimaa Esmail El-Neklawy**

**June 16, 2026 at 2pm  
at CEDEJ**

This research aims to shed light on the experience of the Egyptian Medical Aid Committee during the Italo-Abyssinian War (1935-1936) as a model of cross-border humanitarian response in a complex colonial context, under the umbrella of the British occupation of Egypt. The research seeks to document the genesis of the Aid Committee, its working mechanisms, and the composition of the medical mission it sent to the southern front in Abyssinia, with a focus on the field challenges it faced, Italian violations of international law, and the ICRC's response to them. The importance of the study lies in highlighting the role of Egyptian actors in shaping a humanitarian movement that was relatively independent of the state, and in making a distinct Egyptian contribution to an international relief effort dominated by major powers. The research is divided into three main themes: The first deals with the outbreak of the Italo-Abyssinian War and Egypt's position on it, the second presents the establishment of the Medical Aid Committee and the formation of the medical mission, and the third focuses on the mission's work on the battlefield, in terms of organisation, challenges, and violations. The research provides a comparative analytical reading of the Aid Committee experience, considering humanitarian principles, field practices, and limited international recognition, contributing to a deeper understanding of the role of Egyptian civil society in responding to global crises and Egypt's humanitarian position in Africa in the first half of the twentieth century. The research relies mainly on a range of unpublished Arab and foreign documents, in addition to published documents, contemporary newspapers, periodicals, and references.

Dr. El-Neklawy is a distinguished lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences at Alexandria University. She earned her PhD in 2018 with a dissertation on the "Egyptian Red Crescent Society 1911-1973" and holds a Master's degree (2014) specializing in the political role of Boutros Pasha Ghali. Her academic foundation is marked by a Bachelor's degree completed with an excellent grade and honors in 2009.

Her research excellence is highlighted by a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (2024) at the École Normale Supérieure (ENS) in Lyon, France. This fellowship was funded by the French Embassy in Cairo. Her current primary research project, "A city at war: Alexandria in Egypt's Arabic-language press during the Second World War," explores the intersection of urban history and media.

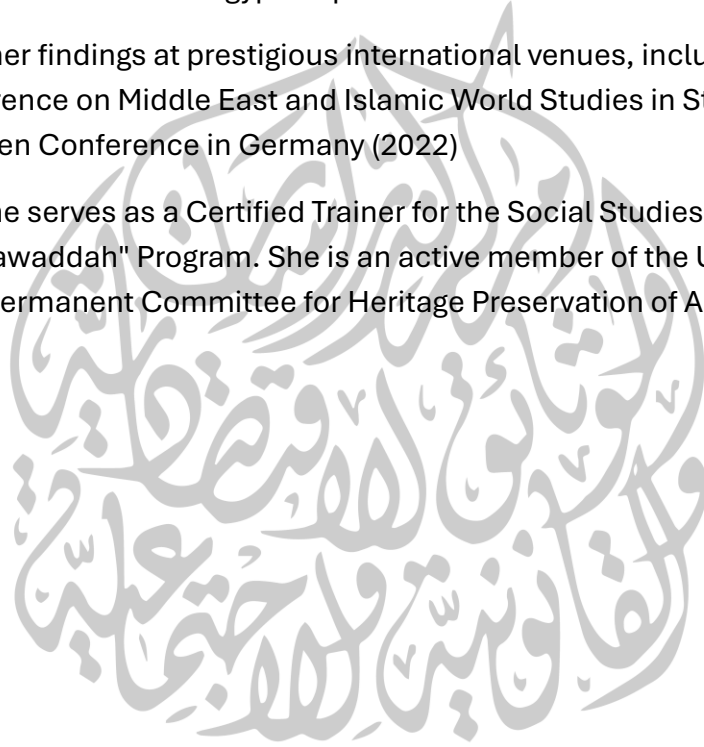
She has authored two significant books published in 2023:

Egyptian Red Crescent Society 1911-1973.

Boutros Pasha Ghali and his role in Egyptian politics 1846-1910.

She has presented her findings at prestigious international venues, including the Sixth International Conference on Middle East and Islamic World Studies in Strasbourg (2025) and the Herrenhausen Conference in Germany (2022)

Beyond research, she serves as a Certified Trainer for the Social Studies Teaching Program and the national "Mawaddah" Program. She is an active member of the Union of Arab Historians and the Permanent Committee for Heritage Preservation of Alexandria.



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