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HOW TO EVACUATE A BIG CITY

International Transport Forum Young Researcher of the Year Award 2010 goes to young Egyptian innovator

27-year-old Egyptian **Hossam Abdelgawad** will be honoured today at the International Transport Forum, the leading global mobility summit in Leipzig, Germany. The PhD-candidate from the University of Toronto, Canada, will receive the *Young Researcher of the Year Award 2010* for his study, which offers a novel approach to the mass evacuation of major cities in case of a catastrophe.

The destruction of New Orleans by hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the undetonated car bomb on New York's Times Square on 1 May 2010 again highlighted the topicality of Hossam Abdelgawad's research. It addresses the growing concern that wide-scale evacuation of a city may become necessary in the event of a natural disaster, or of a terrorist attack. "The numerous man-made catastrophes that menace major communities accentuate the need for proper planning for emergency evacuation", explains Abdelgawad, "my research focuses on coordinating, controlling and optimizing the utilisation of the existing transportation network capacity."

The young Egyptian's study is a first step towards enabling the most efficient evacuation for major emergencies, using different transport modes. Hossam Abdelgawad proposes a novel framework that integrates car-based and mass transit-based evacuation. His integrated approach has been successfully used during a simulated evacuation of the City of Toronto with rapid transit, buses and automobiles.

The Award will be presented today during a Gala Dinner at the International Transport Forum in Leipzig by German Transport Minister, Peter Ramsauer. In all, 31 papers from participants of 32 different nationalities (including co-authors) were received. "The Young Researcher Award is obviously filling a gap in the transport research scene", said **Jack Short**, Secretary General of the ITF. "We are particularly impressed with the wide range of approaches to pressing problems transport faces."

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The International Transport Forum is a strategic think tank for the transport sector. Each year, it brings together Ministers from over 50 countries, along with leading decision-makers and actors from the private sector, civil society and research, to address transport issues of strategic importance. An intergovernmental organisation linked to the OECD, the Forum's goal is to help shape the transport policy agenda, and ensure that it contributes to economic growth, environmental protection, social inclusion and the preservation of human life and wellbeing. The 2010 International Transport Forum, to be held on 26-28 May in Leipzig, Germany, will focus on Transport and Innovation: Unleashing the Potential.