

Open Letter: No more academic collusion with Egypt's military regime

We condemn the wave of repression which has swept Egypt in response to peaceful protests criticising current president Abdel Fattah al-Sisi. Human rights activists say that more than 3000 people have been arrested since 20 September, including Professors Hazem Hosny and Hassan Nafaa of Cairo University, lawyers Mahienour el-Massry, Mohamed Salah Agag and other colleagues, Alaa Abdelfattah and many political figures, activists, journalists and human rights campaigners. We are alarmed that Boris Johnson believes that the UK can make “positive progress in our bilateral relationship” with the Egyptian regime in such circumstances. We are also deeply concerned that once again, UK universities are showing their willingness to put potential revenue from student fees before commitment to human rights and academic freedoms, by pursuing partnerships with private educational firms running “branch campuses” or offering UK degrees in Egypt. University of Hertfordshire, Coventry University and University of London have all been reported as opening, or planning to open for business in Egypt’s New Administrative Capital. This is particularly worrying following the kidnapping, torture and murder of Cambridge University PhD student, Giulio Regeni in January 2016. Italian prosecutors named Egyptian state security agents as suspects in this case in November 2018.

We call on UK universities operating in or planning to open for business in Egypt to suspend these projects until the human rights situation improves enough to ensure that academic freedoms are protected and to join us in a public statement calling on the regime to release political prisoners, respect human rights and protect freedom of expression.

Initial signatories include: **Dr Adam Hanieh**, SOAS; **Professor John Chalcraft**, LSE; **Sean Wallis**, UCL UCU president and UCU National Executive; **Professor Laleh Khalili**, Queen Mary, University of London; **Dr Roberto Roccu**, King's College London; **Professor Leigh Jenco**, LSE; **Professor Neve Gordon**, Queen Mary University of London; **Dr Miriyam Aouragh**, University of Westminster; **Professor Christian Fuchs**, University of Westminster; **Professor Khaled Fahmy**, University of Cambridge; **Jo McNeill**, Chair, University of Liverpool UCU, and UCU National Executive; **Professor Bill Bowring**, Birkbeck College; **Professor Salwa Ismail**, SOAS, University of London; **Professor Des Freedman**, Goldsmiths and over 200 other academics.

See the full list on www.egyptsolidarityinitiative.org/academiccollusionletter

Signatures will be handed to the universities mentioned in the letter with copies to the Egyptian Embassy in the UK and Universities UK. Campaign initiated by Egypt Solidarity Initiative – find out more at www.egyptsolidarityinitiative.org