

Release Patrick George Zaki - Stop the repression in Egypt

Once again the Egyptian government has shown its complete disregard for basic human rights and freedom of expression by detaining and charging Patrick George Zaki, a graduate student at the University of Bologna and a researcher on Gender and Rights with the respected human rights NGO, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights.

We are appalled to hear from EIPR that Patrick was beaten and subjected to electric shocks during a period of enforced disappearance following his arrest on 7 February as he returned to Egypt from Italy to visit his family.

As academics and students we are particularly concerned that our own governments and even some of our own higher education institutions are complicit in this violence - whether by selling weapons and technology which facilitate repression or by opening university branches and licensing degree courses in direct collaboration with the Egyptian regime.

We urge an end to the double standards of our own government and higher education managers, who are happy to promote ‘international academic collaboration’ in Egypt when it generates revenue or builds prestige, but remain silent when students and academics are detained, tortured, or killed by the regime’s security forces. Four years on, family and colleagues of Giulio Regeni, the Cambridge University PhD student who was kidnapped and tortured while doing fieldwork in Cairo in 2016 are still waiting for justice, even though Italian prosecutors have named Egyptian security officers as suspects in his murder.

We call on the UK government to speak out and demand the release of Patrick George Zaki and the dropping of all charges against him. We demand an end to the constant campaigns of detentions and disappearances targeting thousands of people the Egyptian regime considers a threat.

Statement initiated by Egypt Solidarity Initiative (www.egyptsolidarityinitiative.org) - signatures will be published online on our website and will be offered to the media for publication. Please enter names online at <https://forms.gle/azmryBFzd999aPfNA> or scan and email completed forms to egyptcampuscampaign@gmail.com

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