



Subject: Petition in support of Mr. Patrick George Zaki

To: His Excellency Abdel Fattah al-Sisi
President, Arab Republic of Egypt
Office of the President
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Date: 16 January 2021

Your Excellency,

We write on behalf of the Italian Society for the Study of Contemporary History (SISSCo) to express grave concern for Patrick George Zaki, a postgraduate student at the University of Bologna who was arrested on February 7, 2020, and afterwards allegedly subjected to torture, in apparent retaliation for his activity as a researcher.

Mr. Zaki is a twenty-eight year old Egyptian student who came to Italy in August 2019, to pursue a master's degree at the University of Bologna. Moreover, he is a researcher for the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), an organization based in Cairo committed to defending Human Rights.

As members of the undersigned scientific association of higher education, we are gravely concerned about the decision taken by the Egyptian Court on the 7th December 2020 to extend the pre-trial detention for another 45 days. As scholars and teachers, we deeply feel our responsibility towards students, who pursue their research projects with enthusiasm and commitment.

SOCIETÀ ITALIANA PER LO STUDIO DELLA STORIA CONTEMPORANEA

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We learned from international organisations such as Scholars at Risk, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch that the health situation of Mr. Zaki is seriously compromised by the harsh conditions in which he is currently detained while awaiting trial. Mr. Zaki suffers from asthma, and he is at particular risk if exposed to *COVID-19* in the Tora Prison. In a December 12, 2020, letter to his family, Mr. Zaki expressed that he has serious backpain and his mental health is deteriorating. We therefore appeal to Your role as the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt to consider this serious matter, and more broadly the humanitarian concerns that we all share in this health-emergency situation.

We urge you to grant Mr. Zaki the permission to wait for his trial at home with his family, where he could also recover from the physical suffering after many months of detention.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and we trust your understanding and sympathy for the dispassionate motives that guide us all.

Sincerely,

Signature

Daniela Luigia Caglioti, SISSCo President

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