

SCHOLARS AT RISK

NETWORK  ITALY SECTION

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
Al Ittihadia Palace
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt
Fax: +20-2-390-1998
Email: p.spokesman@op.gov.eg

Date: 19th March 2020

Your Excellency,

We write on behalf of our university communities in Italy 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 and a Human Rights defender.

We respectfully urge you to secure the immediate and unconditional release of Mr Zaki, allowing him to go back to resume his studies at the University of Bologna, and to permit the appropriate authorities to investigate his alleged torture.

Patrick George Zaki is a twenty-eight year old Egyptian student who came to Italy in August 2019, to pursue a master's degree on Gender Studies 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.

We understand from Scholars at Risk (SAR), an international network of individuals and institutions committed to protecting scholars and promoting academic freedom – of which our universities are members – that Mr Zaki returned to Egypt for a brief family visit in Mansoura and that, upon his arrival at Cairo International Airport, he was stopped by the Egyptian National Security Agency (NSA). He subsequently disappeared for 24 hours. It has been reported that officers arrested and interrogated him for several hours without the presence of his lawyers in an unknown location.

During these 24 hours he was reportedly subjected to physical abuse and torture, including by electric shocks. The next day, the Public Prosecutor of Mansoura ordered his detention on remand for 15 days, detention that was confirmed on February 22 for another 15 days. According to Front Line Defenders, Mr Zaki was accused of ‘spreading false news,’ ‘incitement to protest without authorisation,’ ‘incitement to violence and terrorism,’ and ‘calling for the overthrow of the state.’

We further understand from SAR that Egyptian authorities presented a document stating that he has been detained because of an arrest warrant issued in September 2019, but they have not publicly disclosed the evidentiary basis for this decision so far.

In the absence of any information that may clarify our understanding of these events, the facts as described above suggest that Mr Zaki is detained in apparent retaliation for his nonviolent exercise of the right to freedom of expression, protected by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 19) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Egypt has ratified in 1982.

We are gravely concerned by Mr Zaki’s detention conditions. We learn from Front Line Defenders that Egyptian authorities limited his contact with his family and with his legal counsel, conditions that may affect the right of due process and a fair trial, according to the Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We therefore respectfully urge you to intervene and ensure the unconditional release of Patrick George Zaki, to allow his return to Italy to continue his studies and to open an investigation on his alleged torture.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and we look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



President European University Institute
Prof. Renaud Dehousse



Director Scuola Normale Superiore
Prof. Luigi Ambrosio



Director Scuola Internazionale Superiore di Studi Avanzati (SISSA)
Prof. Stefano Ruffo



University of Cagliari
Prof. Maria Del Zompo



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE

University of Florence
Prof. Luigi Dei



University of Genova
Prof. Comanducci Paolo



University of Padova
Prof. Rosario Rizzuto



University of Pavia
Prof. Francesco Svelto



University of Siena
Prof. Francesco Frati



University of Trento
Prof. Paolo Collini



University of Trieste
Prof. Roberto Di Lenarda



University of Udine
Prof. Roberto Pinton

CC:

The Honorable Michelle Bachelet
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Email: InfoDesk@ohchr.org

The Honourable Ambassador Mr Amr Mostafa Kamal Helmlly
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The Honorable David Kaye
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The Honorable Michel Forst
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The Honorable José Guevara Bermúdez
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The Honorable Stefania Pucciarelli
President of the Senate of the Italian Republic Commission for Human Rights
Senate of the Republic
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The President
Renaud Dehousse

Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick
George Zaki

European University Institute

Renaud Dehousse

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "R. Dehousse", is positioned below the printed name. The signature is fluid and cursive.

SCUOLA NORMALE SUPERIORE

Luigi Ambrosio | Direttore

Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick George Zaki

Scuola Normale Superiore

The Rector Luigi Ambrosio

Luigi Ambrosio



SISSA

Scuola
Internazionale
Superiore di
Studi Avanzati

Trieste, march 19 2020

Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt – SAR Italy
for Patrick George Zaki

Yours sincerely,

Stefano Ruffo



Full Professor of Condensed Matter Physics and Director, SISSA

Director
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T +39 0403787581
E director@sisa.it
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Il Rettore



Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick George Zaki

University of Cagliari/ Università degli Studi di Cagliari

Maria Del Zompo, Rector Legal Representative

Signature

Magnifico Rettore: Professoressa Maria Del Zompo
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Tel. 070.659670 - Fax 070.669425 - web: www.unica.it - email: rettore@unica.it



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UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
FIRENZE

Il Rettore

***Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR
Italy for Patrick George Zaki***

Università degli Studi di Firenze

Prof. Luigi Dei

Segreteria e Cerimoniale

Piazza San Marco,4 – 50121 Firenze
telefono: +39 055 2757211 fax: +39 055 2757429 email: rettore@unifi.it



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI GENOVA

Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick George Zaki

Name of the University: Università degli Studi di Genova

Full name of the Rector: Prof. Paolo Comanducci

Signature



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ANNI



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI PADOVA

Il Rettore

Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick George Zaki

Università degli Studi di Padova

Rettore
Rosario Rizzuto



UNIVERSITÀ
DI PAVIA

Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick George Zaki

Università degli Studi di Pavia

Prof. Francesco Svelto, the Rector

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'F. Svelto', written over a horizontal line.



UNIVERSITÀ DI SIENA 1240
RETTORE

Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick George Zaki

University of Siena

The Rector Francesco Frati



**UNIVERSITÀ
DI TRENTO**
Rettore

***Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick
George Zaki***

University of Trento

The Rector Paolo Collini



UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE

Subject: Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick George Zaki

University of Trieste

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE

Rector prof. Roberto di Lenarda

Signature



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI UDINE

IL RETTORE

Subject: *Petition to the President, Arab Republic of Egypt - SAR Italy for Patrick George Zaki*

Name of the University/Institution University of Udine

Full name of the Rector/President Prof. Roberto Pinton

Signature