



**Máster Oficial Erasmus Mundus en Estudios de las Mujeres y de Género
Erasmus Mundus Master's Degree in Women's and Gender Studies**

The **Erasmus Mundus Master Degree in Women and Gender Studies (GEMMA)**, coordinated by the University of Granada (Spain) with the participation of the University of Bologna, Central European University, University of Lodz, University of Oviedo, University of Utrecht and University of York and the support of the European Union, expresses its **utmost concern** about the safety of one of its students, **Mr Patrick George Zaki**, who was detained on February 7, 2020 upon his arrival to Egypt for a short visit to his family.

Patrick George Zaki, a 28-year old Egyptian human rights researcher and current student of the GEMMA programme at the University of Bologna, is being held in custody, after being taken by the National Security Agency at Cairo Airport. After 17 hours of interrogation about his research and activism on human rights, he was later transferred to NSA offices in his hometown, Mansoura. He has remained in detention and was denied communication with his family and friends until Saturday 15th of February, when his appeal for release was rejected by the court and it was decided that he would remain detained pending further investigation.

Considering the values which are the basis of our academic community, such as freedom of thought, the centrality of critical thinking, social responsibility and commitment, we adamantly reaffirm the importance of protecting human and political rights and, more specifically, the right to individual freedom and to freedom of speech, everywhere and for everyone.

We are deeply committed to continue working towards Patrick Zaki's release so that he can return safely and promptly to his coursework in Bologna. Until then, it is our duty to ensure that the Spanish Government and the European Union continue to do all in their power to guarantee Patrick's return to our community. We also urge the Egyptian Government to immediately and unconditionally release Patrick, let him resume his studies, and take every necessary measure to safeguard the wellbeing of any member of the academic community. They must make clear that students, investigators, and professors as well as journalists or human rights defenders are not the object of any threat or attack.

The University of Granada, Spain (GEMMA consortium coordinator)

The University of Bologna, Italy

Central European University, Hungary

The University of Lodz, Poland

The University of Oviedo, Spain

Utrecht University, The Netherlands

The University of York, United Kingdom