

Granada, 7th February 2020.

The community of GEMMA, Erasmus Mundus Master in Women's and Gender Studies (coordinated by the University of Granada) expresses its immense concern about the security of one of its students, who was detained on Friday upon his arrival to Egypt on a family visit from Italy where he currently studies and resides. The Egyptian authorities are still keeping him deprived of his freedom, after being subjected to serious violations of his rights.

Patrick George Zaki is a 27-year-old Egyptian human rights researcher and student at Alma Mater Studiorum - Università di Bologna who is currently paying a hefty price for his commitment to social justice and equality. Even with the arrival of Al-Sisi's brutal regime known for silencing countless voices, Patrick was not deterred from his efforts. With unwavering determination and persistence, Patrick has been bravely fighting for the Egyptian people's freedom of expression in a nation ruled by a military dictatorship that has been ruthless in suppressing any opposition.

Patrick was detained upon arrival at the Cairo International Airport in the early hours of Friday morning. Patrick was questioned illegally at the airport's State Security Office for 20 hours and deprived of all his legal rights such as the right to a defence attorney. For over 24 hours, his friends and family had no knowledge of his whereabouts.

Patrick was eventually found at the prosecutor's office in his hometown of Mansoura the following day. The police issued an arrest report claiming he was arrested from his parent's house on Saturday, in order to justify the more than 20 hours of his arrest during which his whereabouts were unknown. This information is not surprising considering that this is not the first time that defenders of human rights, such as Giulio Regeni, an Italian researcher dedicated to human rights, have been silenced and have gone missing at the hands of Egyptian security agencies as a consequence of their work in favor of free, democratic societies. Patrick's life is in danger and we must mobilize urgently.

The prosecutor's office has then charged Patrick with a list of grave yet fraudulent charges including:

- Spreading false news and statements that disturb social peace;
- Calling for demonstrations without obtaining a permit, with the intention of diminishing the prestige of the state and disturbing peace and public security;
- Inciting to overthrow the government and promoting principles and ideas that lead to undermining the basic principles of the constitution;
- Administration of an information network for the purpose of disturbing public order and harming national security;
- Promoting the commission of a terrorist crime and use of violence.
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Based on these charges, the prosecutor decided on Saturday afternoon to keep Patrick in pre-trial detention for 15 days.

Every minute that passes poses a serious threat to the safety and well-being of Patrick. Given the grave details mentioned previously and the Egyptian regime's long track record of human rights abuses, we demand that:

1- Patrick is immediately and unconditionally released, and all charges against him are dropped;

2- A serious and independent investigation into the conditions of his arrest and violation of his human rights is launched;

3- Practices such as the illegal arrests and detention of students, researchers, academics, and journalists; as well as the forging of false charges against them, are stopped.

We demand truth and justice. For Patrick, for Giulio and for all those who fight for societies that are more just and egalitarian.

First and second year students of GEMMA (UGR)