



29 May 2008

Dear Jacqui Smith MP

The University and College Union (UCU) is the largest trade union and professional association for academics, lecturers, trainers, researchers and academic-related staff working in further and higher education throughout the UK.

As the General Secretary of UCU, I am contacting you about the case of Mr. Hicham Yezza, who is facing deportation to Algeria on Flight BA894 from Heathrow, destination Algiers, at 9.45am this Sunday, 1 June. As you know, it has been established that Mr. Yezza has no involvement in activity that threatens public safety. In spite of the basis for his original arrest, no charges were ever brought and he is clear of all suspicion. Hicham was then charged with offences relating to his immigration status. He has expressed his willingness to contest the charges in a court of law, but has been denied this basic right to a fair hearing. It is alarming that the Home Office seems to have lost interest in this legal process and is willing to deport him so hurriedly.

Mr. Yezza has been resident in the UK for 13 years, during which time he has studied for both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Nottingham and contributed to the academic and wider community of Nottingham. He has formed many strong friendships and a long-term and stable relationship with his partner, an EU national, and an application for British citizenship is underway. He has established himself as a voracious reader and an authority on literature and music and he had been planning to make his yearly trip to Wales for the Hay Festival when he was suddenly arrested.

I implore you to intervene to halt the deportation before it is too late to rectify what seems to be a very hurried and unjust process. Hicham has been incarcerated and interrogated since Wednesday 15 May without charges or a trial as an end result. He is denied the chance to address charges or defend himself in court. I urge you consider how this appears to the general public, who are wondering how a rushed and unjust deportation can be preferable to establishing the truth.

Please do not deport Hicham Yezza in this hurried fashion, and allow him the chance to defend himself in a proper hearing.

Yours sincerely

Sally Hunt  
UCU General Secretary