

9 February 2016

Nasser Kamel

Ambassador

Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in London

26 South Street

LONDON

W1K 1DW

Your Excellency

We are writing to you on behalf of the 110,000 members of the University and College Union (UCU) in the UK, and in particular on behalf of members of the Cambridge University local association, to express our outrage regarding the news of the apparent torture and murder of Giulio Regeni, an Italian doctoral student from the University of Cambridge, who disappeared in Cairo on 25 January and whose body was found on a road outside Cairo on 3 February.

Our thoughts go out first of all to his family and friends at this acutely painful moment. Giulio was also an active member of the research community at Cambridge. Colleagues at the university and across the wider academic community are deeply saddened to learn of his death. Academia as a whole is diminished by the loss of a young researcher whose work on the independent labour movement in Egypt tackled questions which are vitally important to our understanding of contemporary Egyptian society.

Giulio's initial disappearance and now murder have occurred in the midst of a security crackdown which has resulted in mass arbitrary arrests, a dramatic increase in reports of torture within police stations, and other cases of disappearances, according to documentation by local and international human rights organisations. While we welcome the statement by Egyptian Ambassador to Italy, Amr Helmy, that the Egyptian authorities will fully investigate Giulio's death, we note that according to Amnesty International, bodies reporting to the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior and the Egyptian Ministry of Defence routinely practice the same kinds of torture that Giulio is reported to have suffered against hundreds of Egyptian citizens each year.

We, therefore, call on the Egyptian authorities to cooperate with an independent and impartial investigation into all instances of forced disappearances, cases of torture and deaths in detention during January and February 2016, alongside any ongoing investigations by criminal prosecutors into Giulio's death, in order that those

responsible for these crimes can be identified and brought to justice.

Giulio's murder is the most recent, if the most deadly, example of the growing danger posed by the current political climate in Egypt to all those engaged in academic work. Violations of academic freedom and freedom of expression are on the rise in Egypt and according to the Middle East Studies Association they include the denial of entry to the country and harassment of numerous scholars and researchers; gross state interference in university student and faculty governance; the dismissals and expulsions of hundreds of students and faculty and the sentencing of academics to death.

We, therefore, call on the Egyptian authorities to respect international norms regarding academic freedom, various provisions of Egyptian law, and international treaties to which your government is a signatory.

As trade unionists we also call on the Egyptian authorities to desist from its suppression of the independent labour movement and ensure genuine freedom of association for Egyptian workers.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Sally Hunt

UCU General Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Rutter". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr Michael Rutter

President, Cambridge UCU