

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 27-year old Egyptian human rights researcher and currently a **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 and disappeared for 17 hours. He was interrogated on issues related to his work on human rights and later transferred to NSA offices in his hometown, Mansoura. He remained in detention and denied communication with his family and friends until Saturday 15, when the appeals court ruled that he would remain detained pending further investigation. NGOs and lawyers dealing with previous detention cases fear that he is at risk of torture.

We **urge the Egyptian government** to immediately and unconditionally release Patrick George Zaki, and that, while in custody, it is ensured that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and that he has access to his lawyers and family. We also **demand** that all necessary measures to **prevent further threats and attacks against students, researchers, academics, journalists and human rights defenders** are taken.

The **Erasmus Mundus Master Degree in Women and Gender Studies (GEMMA)** teaches students to be critical and defend freedom of expression, gender equality and justice for everyone. Patrick is an exemplary member of the GEMMA community, committed to these principles and striving to create a better world for all of us. The GEMMA consortium will not permit the criminalisation of research on human and gender rights.

We cannot allow the criminalisation and repression exerted on Patrick, or on any other student, because of his defense of the fundamental rights of freedom and equality. These are the principles the GEMMA consortium has transmitted to its students. They are the foundation of the seven institutions in the GEMMA consortium and of **the European Union which selected us as Erasmus Mundus programme precisely because of them.**

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

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