

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Acting Head of Division

MENA Middle East and North Africa
MENA.5 Middle East I - Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan

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Ref: Your letter of 25 July 2023

Dear Professor Neve Gordon and Professor Rosita Di Peri,

Thank you for your letter dated 25 July 2023 addressed to the President of the Commission concerning ongoing detentions of students, academics, researchers and human rights defenders in Egypt.

The European Union pays close attention to human rights developments in Egypt and addresses them in various ways. In particular, we raise our concerns, including individual cases, in our bilateral political dialogue with the Egyptian authorities and at the United Nations, as most recently communicated in our Statement¹ at the General Debate of the UN Human Rights Committee. More structurally, the EU addresses its concerns through the Dialogue (sub-committee) on Political Matters, Human Rights and Democracy – International and Regional Issues that is organised annually. The last iteration took place in December 2022. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr Eamon Gilmore, also discusses human rights matters, including individual cases and treatment of persons in detention and is in regular contact with his Egyptian counterparts.

As regards Mr. Zaki's detention in February 2020, the EU and its Member States have been closely engaged with Egyptian authorities on this specific case, with a view to observing hearings and calling for his release bilaterally and in multilateral fora. The presidential pardon granted to Patrick George Zaki is seen as a positive development.

¹ HRC52 Item 2 General Debate on HC oral update

The European Union works and will continue to work with Egyptian authorities and civil society actors to promote freedom of speech and space for civil society, which play an essential role in fostering development and promoting democracy and human rights. The EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities for 2021-2027 agreed in June 2022 also reiterate the commitment from both sides to further promoting fundamental freedoms and human rights ⁽²⁾ as well as the Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Egypt for 2021-2027 under the Priority area 3: Social cohesion, Modern and Democratic State ⁽³⁾.

Yours sincerely,



Alessio CAPPELLANI

⁽²⁾ [EU-Egypt Association Council - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/infobox/1234567890/p1-1234567890.pdf)

⁽³⁾ [C 2022 4049 1 ANNEX EN V3 P1 1915690.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/infobox/1234567890/p1-1234567890.pdf)