



October 25, 2018

HE Dr. Anwar bin Mohammed Gargash
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
[Via email: inquiries@mofa.gov.ae](mailto:inquiries@mofa.gov.ae)

Your Excellency:

We write today in our capacity as leaders of the American Political Science Association (APSA), a non-partisan scholarly association representing more than 11,000 professors and students of political science worldwide. We urge you to immediately release Matthew Hedges, a British PhD student currently being held with little access to legal or health services, and with severely curtailed access to family members.

We are deeply concerned about the conditions in which Mr. Hedges has been held. [Reports](#) make clear that Mr. Hedges' health and wellbeing have declined throughout his detention and his contact with family and support system has been extremely limited as he approaches trial. As a party to the Arab Charter on Human Rights, the UAE expressed a deep commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights at home and abroad. We ask that you ensure Mr. Hedges' treatment meets those standards.

We understand from media reports that Mr. Hedges was [arrested on May 5, 2018](#) and charged with espionage on behalf of the United Kingdom's Secret Intelligence Service, and has been held since that time. Charging an academic researcher with espionage is a severe violation of academic freedom and calls into question the safety of all researchers who work with the UAE. It is our understanding that Mr. Hedges' fieldwork for his dissertation was [conducted](#) in line with the University of Durham's research ethics procedures. Absent additional information, the facts as described suggest Mr. Hedges' fieldwork, which addresses sensitive military and civil issues, may have been misinterpreted. To cast academic fieldwork as foreign espionage would only exacerbate growing international concerns about the UAE's dedication to the freedoms of inquiry and expression.

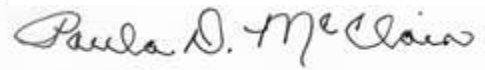
We respectfully urge you to release Mr. Hedges and to reaffirm the UAE's respect for academic freedom and freedom of expression. If Mr. Hedges' trial does continue, we ask that the case proceed in a manner consistent with the UAE's obligations under international law, including recognized standards of due process, fair trial, and free expression. We also ask that you ensure Mr. Hedges' wellbeing while in custody, including access to adequate medical care, legal counsel, and family. We thank you for your attention to this important matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Rogers M. Smith

Rogers M. Smith, President



Paula D. McClain

Paula D. McClain, President-Elect



Kathleen Thelen

Kathleen Thelen, Past-President



Steven Rathgeb Smith

Steven Rathgeb Smith, Executive Director