

Bonn, 5 February 2016

Letter of condolence to friends and family of Giulio Regeni

It is with the greatest sadness and sorrow that we received the news of our colleague Giulio Regeni's tragic passing in Cairo, where he was a visiting fellow at the American University of Cairo (AUC) conducting fieldwork for his doctoral thesis. After ten long days following his sudden disappearance from downtown Cairo on 25 January 2016, authorities confirmed his brutal death in circumstances that remain still unclear. Our thoughts are with his family, friends, and colleagues.

Giulio was a doctoral student at the University of Cambridge, at the Department of Politics and International Relations (POLIS) and the Center of Development Studies. He joined the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) as a visiting Researcher between July and August, 2015. Giulio came to us with strong recommendations from his colleagues at the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), where he previously worked on industrial policy and political economy of development in the Arab region, both at the Vienna and Cairo offices. He was interested in a summer internship at the DIE, before embarking on a 6-month fieldwork in Egypt in September. Although very young and just at the start of his doctoral studies, it became clear from our exchanges that his preparation and level of knowledge on the political economy of development exceed expectations. Thus, we invited him to join us as a visiting researcher instead. At the end of his stay, after a short but highly productive collaboration, we offered him a researcher position at the DIE, which he decided to put on hold until he had advanced with his doctoral research. The fruits of our collaboration will be soon published in a DIE Discussion Paper on the "Developmental State in the 21st Century – Calling for a New Social Contract." While at the DIE, Giulio also worked on an analysis of industrial policy in Egypt (past and present) and the changing state-society relations in Egypt. His doctoral thesis focused on the formation of independent trade unions in post-Mubarak Egypt and on democratic institutional development.

Giulio's passion for economic development, for Egypt and the Arab world, were genuine and contagious. He used this energy, his positive thinking, optimism, and sharp intellect with utmost dedication to understand, beyond surface, the development challenges the region is confronted with below the surface. His deep knowledge of history, development policy, political economy, and his ability to 'connect the dots' and articulate these inter-relationships in an elegant and eloquent way, were highly admirable. His thinking was influenced by his mentors at the University of Cambridge, Ha-Joon Chang, Agit Singh, Maha Abdelrahman, and by other leading scholars on the political economy of development and industrial policy, such as Alice Amsden, Peter Evans, Diane Davis, Dani Rodrik, and experts on the Middle East and North Africa. He took the best from them and used his unique creative lens to find new ways to tackle development problems in the region.

It is a great loss to all of us that his enormous intellectual potential has been shattered so early, in a land that was his second home, for which he was dedicated to making it a better place. He touched our hearts and minds and he will not be forgotten. We had hoped for a long and fruitful collaboration. In spite of the disillusion and sense of injustice we feel now as colleagues, friends, and fellow development practitioners, we hope to carry on the work that Giulio started.

Rest in peace, Giulio!

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