

PRESS RELEASE

University 'Terror Lies' Exposed by Unileaks

For immediate release on Sunday 12:30am, 12 June 2011.

A group of students and alumni have teamed up with the whistleblowing website [Unileaks](#) to publish over 200 internal University of Nottingham and government documents. The leaks corroborate assertions made in Dr. Rod Thornton's whistleblowing [paper](#) "*How a student's use of a library book became a major Islamist plot*". His research exposes the role that senior university figures played in the wrongful 'terror-arrest' and subsequent treatment of student Rizwaan Sabir and staff-member Hicham Yezza in May 2008. The university immediately suspended Dr. Thornton for writing his paper and dismissed his claims as '[baseless](#)'. Now all of the evidence has been made public. His supporters believe there are full and proper grounds for an independent public inquiry into the University of Nottingham.

The cache of documents includes highly sensitive material, for example, from the Met Police Special Branch, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the Home Office and Dept. for Universities (BIS) and others.

The Wiki-leaks inspired move comes four days after the release of the Government's revised *Prevent* strategy which puts increased pressure on universities to counter extremism on campus. Much of the leaked material shows how the University of Nottingham lied to the public, the Home Office and the Minister for Universities, Bill Rammell, before, during and after the terror-arrests. It also shows how conspired to remove student Rizwaan Sabir by manipulating his final Masters degree. [Pictures](#) have also emerged of student protesters being filmed covertly by Uni security.

A spokesperson for students campaign SWAN ([Support the Whistleblower At Nottingham](#)), Sam Walton, said: "These leaks show how everything can and does go wrong when a brand conscious university is left to deal with security issues such as terrorism. What's more this case highlights how a leading British university can act with impunity on such a sensitive issue."

The leak of these documents comes for two reasons:

1. To push for a public inquiry: the leaks and Dr. Thornton's work raise serious questions that need answering (see sample of leaks below).
2. The reinstatement of Dr. Thornton: these documents show that the former-soldier did everything to avail of whistle-blower legal protections. He attempted to raise all concerns with relevant entities, the police, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, other external bodies and even the current Vice Chancellor, David Greenaway, before going public.

The leaked material can be accessed by downloading an interactive version of Dr Thornton's article [here](#). Clicking on the footnotes will take you to the actual material. The leaks can also be accessed via [Unileaks](#)

Over 60 scholars from around the world, including MIT Professor Noam Chomsky, have [backed calls for an independent public inquiry and Dr Thornton's immediate reinstatement](#).

5 Uni-Leaks

MINI-DIGESTS OF UNILEAKED DOCUMENTS – more @ www.academicfreedom.co.uk

Contact us for an exclusive on next digest.

1. ONE STANDARD FOR ARRESTED STUDENT, ANOTHER FOR EVERYONE ELSE.

Publicly the anti-terror arrests may have seemed reasonable to those listening to the Vice Chancellor talking about ‘terrorist material’ for which others had been prosecuted for [\[here\]](#). The Registrar also stated these documents had ‘no valid reason whatsoever to exist’ [\[here\]](#). Likewise the Registrar met with Rizwaan Sabir privately and stated he was “informed by the Police that it was illegal for you [Sabir] to possess this type of material” [\[here\]](#). However, the police said it was ‘the University authorities’ who ‘made clear’ that Sabir should not have the document [see [here](#)] and according to a police document [\[here\]](#) that decision was made by a Professor of Romance languages - a non-expert. Better still, ALL of the so-called ‘terrorist material’ were freely available to anyone with a library card [\[here\]](#) or access to high street bookshops such as [Blackwells](#), [Waterstone’s](#) or [Amazon](#). Despite this the University drafted a letter (within 24 hours of Sabir’s arrest) to suspend him as a student and exclude him from campus [\[here\]](#).

2. LYING TO THE PUBLIC.

Following the arrests, the Vice Chancellor publicly stated in a Times Higher article that ‘we’ made a ‘risk assessment’ before calling in the police after finding the documents [\[here\]](#). This would have been in accordance with government guidelines [\[here\]](#). On the University website he even wrote of the ‘collective’ decision to call the police in [\[here\]](#). However, in internal communications, the *Registrar* says it was *he alone* who made the decision to call the police [\[here\]](#) - page 4]. What’s more, the Registrar admits that he never read the documents in question [\[here\]](#) - page 2]. The University does not have evidence to suggest that a risk assessment was conducted [\[here\]](#) - see point a]. Someone is telling lies! Privately the VC also communicated to the Dept. for Universities that there was no ‘collective’ decision to call the police [\[here\]](#) - page 2, 3rd bullet point].

3. BLAMING THE STUDENT FOR EVERYTHING

A meeting between Sabir, the Registrar and the Head of Security was called to reportedly check on his welfare post-release [\[here\]](#). However in the meeting Sabir was brow-beaten and blamed for causing this incident. Sabir’s use of ‘academic’ material for his research was also compared to ‘the use of child pornography’ by the Registrar. He was told he could have been fined or suspended for misusing the computer facilities, but the university would let him off this time. See the meeting transcript (19 pages!) [\[here\]](#) and the Registrar’s letter to Sabir summarising the meeting [\[here\]](#).

4. SMEARING THE STUDENTS NAME.

The Head of Security reported to University Management that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had “reluctantly accepted” not to charge Sabir as a terrorist [\[here\]](#). When Dr. Thornton approached the CPS about this claim, they stated that the CPS “do not “reluctantly accept” that people be charged or not charged” [\[here\]](#). SWAN thinks this is starting to look like a smear campaign! Read on. The University announced to the public that Sabir was initially arrested for “interfering” with the police investigation. This claim was also erroneously repeated by the Home Office [\[here\]](#). The police, however, never stated that Sabir was arrested for “interfering”. When challenged, the Head of Security told Sabir: “I’m not sure [why you were arrested] but that’s the impression we got” [\[here\]](#) – page 3].

5. STUDENT IS FORCED OUT.

Post-release senior management and the ‘Head of Security’ were kept informed of Sabir’s academic progress [\[here\]](#). The Head of Security also, curiously, requested Sabir’s undergraduate results [\[here\]](#). Why? When Sabir decided to abandon his PhD studies and leave due to untoward pressure, staff in the School of Politics sent celebratory emails and comments. For example, the University Exams Officer wrote: “Fingers crossed. Best thing for all concerned” [\[here\]](#). The Head of the Politics Department wrote: ‘Nice to have some good news!’ [\[here\]](#) and declared that he was ‘both delighted and astonished!! What on earth are the ESRC [Sabir’s new PhD funders] thinking - but then who cares?!’ [\[here\]](#).

CONTACT FOR COMMENT OR INTERVIEW

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