



The African Studies Association
of the United Kingdom

21 Russell Square
London WC1B 5EA

5th February 2020

To: The Home Secretary, the Rt Hon Priti Patel MP

Dear Secretary of State,

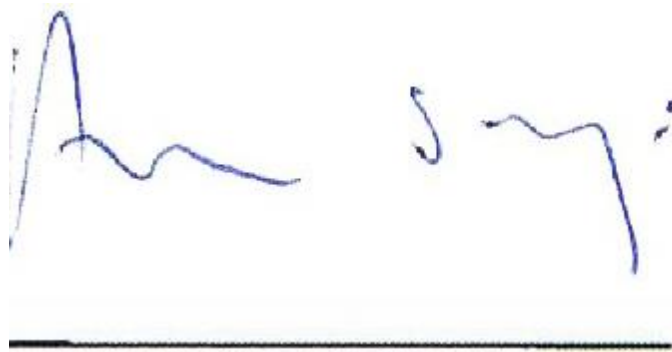
On behalf of the African Studies Association of the UK, we want to raise our deep concern, following the threat by the Home Office last year to deport the African academic Furaha Asani of Leicester University, over the refusal of indefinite leave to remain for Dr Asiya Islam, our colleague at Cambridge University.

This is not an isolated case of apparent discrimination against academics of foreign heritage, as our work with the All Party Parliamentary Group for Africa has shown. The APPG's report on [Visa Refusals for African Visitors to the UK](#) recorded the repeated cases of visa denials to African colleagues in academia, the arts, business and science. We are concerned that cases such as those of Ms Asani and Dr Islam are not only contrary to the Government's own stated policy that it is intent on fostering global talent in the UK, for example through the recently announced Global Talent Visa scheme, but will communicate the message that the UK will *not* welcome international academics at an important time for the country's relations with the rest of the world.

The Prime Minister himself assured African leaders in person, only last month, that the UK would look at people not passports to encourage people to be educated in and trade with the UK. The reasoning for the refusal of Dr Islam's request appears directly to contradict the explicit terms of the Global Talent Visa scheme which allows academics to spend time away to do the research they need.

We therefore ask that you urgently reconsider the cases of these two of our academic colleagues and review any others in similar circumstances. Otherwise there risks being serious damage not only to the UK's reputation, but to the academic excellence to which this country and its universities aspire.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ambreena Manji', is written over a horizontal line.

Ambreena Manji

President, African Studies Association UK, on behalf of Council