



The African Studies Association of  
the United Kingdom

21 Russell Square  
London WC1B 5EA

18<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Dear Valerie Amos,

*Re: SOAS Library – Open Letter*

I write as President of the African Studies Association of the UK to express our grave concerns about proposed cuts to SOAS library. At our Council meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> December, we resolved to communicate these concerns to you in the strongest terms.

We understand that the proposed budget cuts are in the region of £650,000 annually and that this will result in the loss of 25% of library staff, including vital subject specialists and front-line roles. We believe that targeting a unique and specialist library collection of materials from Africa, Asia and the Middle East cannot be an acceptable approach.

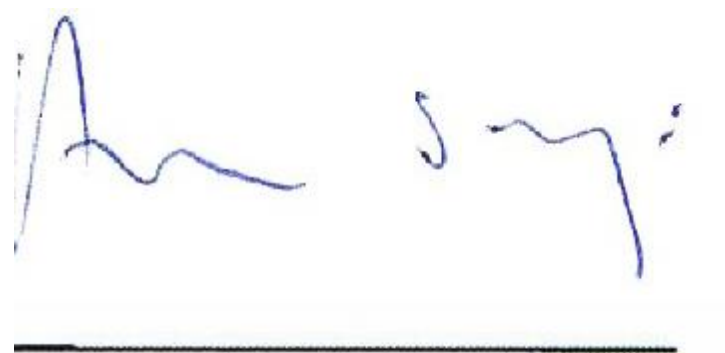
SOAS Library is recognised as one of five UK National Research Libraries. In this capacity, it receives a grant roughly equivalent to the amount being slated for cuts. The proposed cuts threaten to undermine the value of the collections to students and researchers as well as to the institution itself. We believe this is a decision that will be regretted in the long term.

We join with others to ask you to explore other options to ensure the long-term maintenance of the library at current levels.

Whilst SOAS Library plays a vital role for its own students and researchers and others based in London, it also occupies a national position as the custodian of materials from Asia, the Middle East and Africa, including in African languages. These are valued by researchers from around the world. This is evidenced by the deep concerns to the proposed cuts that have been expressed both nationally and internationally.

We urge you to recall the historical role and future responsibilities of SOAS and urgently to reconsider the proposed cuts.

Yours sincerely,



Prof Ambreena Manji

President, African Studies Association UK, on behalf of Council

Copied:

Dawn Wright, Subject Librarian (Africa), SOAS Library;

Save SOAS Library

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