

22 May 2024

We, LSE SU Palestine Society, support Janet Olufunke Damiro following her blatantly unfair dismissal by the management of the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE).

This statement follows a letter by the United Voices of the World (UVW) union, [which outlines how LSE used an isolated and forgetful mistake to justify Janet's abrupt dismissal](#).

We are deeply disturbed by Janet's dismissal without notice or pay, and LSE's seemingly discriminatory disciplinary process. **We demand that Janet is reinstated to her position.** LSE SU Palestine Society believes that Janet also deserves recognition for her thirteen years of cleaning service at LSE, an apology from LSE's management, and compensation for LSE's gross misconduct.

What Happened?

Allan Blair (Director of Facilities Management), Indi Seehra (Director of Human Resources), and Professor Larry Kramer (President and Vice Chancellor), have dismissed Janet Olufunke Damiro without notice or pay, and criminalised her during a seemingly biased, discriminatory and disproportionate disciplinary process.

She is a 70-year old Nigerian grandmother and a cleaning staff at the LSE for over thirteen years. She was dismissed earlier this year after a misunderstanding involving a misplaced bracelet. It is deeply disturbing that LSE would seek such sweeping punishment for a minor mistake.

Janet told UVW that: "I don't steal. I'm not a thief. I've worked at LSE for over 10 years without any problems. I just forgot. At my age, you can forget like that."

During a disciplinary meeting, Janet was treated as if she were a criminal. Janet explained that, "[t]hey look[ed] at me like I [was] a thief. It's unfair. I've not been myself at all, I don't sleep at night. I don't have a job now, but I have to pay my rent and bills. Who's going to employ me at this age?"

The letter by UVW adds that Janet was "visibly distressed during the disciplinary meeting, breaking down in tears and needing support from her union representative."

To add insult to injury, LSE management publicly announced Janet's departure before she was given her legal right to appeal.

Seventy-two of Janet's fellow co-workers signed a statement affirming her integrity and strong work ethic. Three of her supervisors confirmed she has never faced any issues like this. Janet's daughter wrote to LSE to explain how her mother's age and language barriers may have played a role in this misunderstanding. This misconduct by LSE against a widely respected employee with a previously impeccable record is thoroughly shameful.

This appalling treatment by management seems discriminatory, potentially revealing a racial, gender, age, and class-based bias in LSE's conduct. Janet's case continues a trend of widespread

discrimination, harassment, and bullying at LSE, ostensibly emblematic of a broader structural issue.

What is the Broader Context?

In 2023, UVW won an Employment Tribunal claim against LSE [on behalf of another migrant cleaner who was dismissed after the university refused to implement medical adjustments recommended by doctors following a long-term health condition](#). This previous case echoes LSE's seemingly discriminatory mistreatment of Janet.

In 2017, UVW member-cleaners forced LSE [to end outsourcing through strike action](#), demonstrating the university's long-standing neglect of low-paid labour until publicly challenged.

In 2023, the LSE UCU detailed how LSE [implemented a process of steep casualisation, and thus precarity, of its academic workforce between 2014-2015 and 2021-2022](#).

More recently, [in May 2024 a sexual assault case at LSE highlighted once more structural neglect of staff and students](#).

Similarly, the recent repression faced by students between June-December 2024 for protesting around Palestinian liberation exposes the [weaponisation of the disciplinary procedure by LSE management](#). Furthermore, in June 2024 [LSE SU Islamic Society released a report documenting Islamophobic harassment, discriminatory practices and prejudices at LSE](#).

These instances demonstrate LSE SU Palestine Society's argument that LSE creates a working and learning environment that is structurally harmful to workers and students—in deeply classist, racialised, and gendered ways—to exploit by way of disciplinary and punitive measures.

How to Respond?

As LSE SU Palestine Society, we stand in solidarity with Janet and echo UVW's statement that her dismissal is **unreasonable, unjustified and unlawful**.

1. Please read, sign and share the letter by UVW [here](#).
2. Please read, sign and share the petition organised by the LSE SU Palestine Society [here](#).

Justice for Janet Now.

LSE SU Palestine Society



This statement is endorsed by the following LSE organisations and collectives:
LSE SU Islamic Society

Note: If you are part of an LSE organisation or collective, and wish to endorse this statement, please email palestine@lsesu.org.