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Professor Karabus has our support, says UCT

The University of Cape Town has been working behind the scenes in support of Emeritus Associate Professor Cyril Karabus since his arrest and detention in the United Arab Emirates on 18 August 2012, it announced today.

Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price said in a letter to UCT staff and students: "I have been in contact with [Professor Karabus'] wife for the last four weeks. In accordance with her wishes, UCT – and the Dean of the Health Sciences Faculty, Professor Marian Jacobs, in particular – has been playing an active role behind the scenes to assist Professor Karabus and his family. We will continue to do so until this ordeal is brought to an end. Our greatest concern is to act in a way that will respect the family's wishes for discretion, to allow the legal and diplomatic channels to remain open so that this situation will be brought to a swift and smooth resolution."

Dr Price advised staff and students of an online petition they could sign in support of Professor Karabus on Avaaz.org as well as the [Prof Cyril Karabus page](#) on Facebook.

Professor Karabus is an international expert in the field of paediatric oncology and haematology and a former UCT staff member. Dr Price said: "It would not be an exaggeration to say that thousands of families have expressed gratitude to him for his tireless care of their children. He is known and respected for his high standards of clinical care and his personal integrity."

Professor Karabus was arrested while in transit through Dubai from the United Kingdom to South Africa. The charges against him relate to the death in 2002 of a young girl who had acute myeloid leukaemia (a severe cancer of the blood). In that year, Professor Karabus spent about five weeks as a locum at the Sheikh Khalifa Medical Centre in Abu Dhabi, and during this time he treated the young girl, who later died as a result of her illness. At the conclusion of his locum, Professor Karabus returned home, unaware that criminal charges were about to be brought against him. It appears that sometime later he was tried and convicted in the UAE criminal courts on charges of manslaughter and falsifying documents. He was tried in absentia, without the opportunity to mount a defence. His sentence includes imprisonment for three years six months plus the payment of compensation.

Until his arrest almost 10 years later, Professor Karabus remained unaware of the charges and conviction. He was not asked to attend the court proceedings or to answer to the charges.

Dr Price said: "The treatment he has received and the fact that he has been denied bail seem both unreasonable and unjust."

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