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April 12, 2016

Sent via email

Andrea Bartlett, President  
c/o Board of Directors  
Ryerson Students' Union, CFS Local 24  
55 Gould St., Student Centre, SCC 311  
Toronto, ON, M5B 1E9  
exec@rsuonline.ca

**Re: Immediate Reinstatement of Gilary Massa**

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Dear Ms. Bartlett:

I am writing to you on behalf of CUPE Ontario, the largest union in Ontario representing more than 250,000 members, including approximately 30,000 workers at universities across the province. I am also writing on behalf of our Human Rights Committee, and its related committees of CUPE Ontario: the Women's Committee, the Racial Justice Committee, the Aboriginal Council, the Workers with Disabilities Committee, the Pink Triangle Committee, and the International Solidarity Committee. CUPE has a long tradition of fighting for human rights, including the right of women to take pregnancy and maternity leave without fear of losing their jobs. These are fundamental rights of women that must be respected if we are to create an equal society.

The decision to fire Ms. Massa while she was exercising her basic right to maternity leave is beyond shameful. Not only is this a violation of her legal rights, but it is a hostile move that strikes at the heart of women's equality. This anti-worker and anti-woman action will not be tolerated. We will not sit idly by and allow this to continue. CUPE Ontario will mount a strong fight for justice for Gilary.

The firing of Gilary Massa, a black-identified Muslim woman, is an affront to all of us who demand employment equality for all. The fact that she was fired during a maternity leave undermines a well-established right, one that is intended to protect all women. The RSU has lost any claim to being a voice for the marginalized. It has lost the right to call itself a progressive voice because of the actions of this executive. This is among the worst employer practices we have seen.

Replacing Gilary Massa with a friend of the executive is a shockingly corrupt decision. The fact that Gilary's work is continuing to be done by someone clearly indicates that her position is needed. Attempting to mask the corruption of this decision simply by changing the name of the position is insulting.

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**Fred Hahn**  
President

**BUILDING A BETTER ONTARIO**

**Candace Rennick**  
Secretary-Treasurer

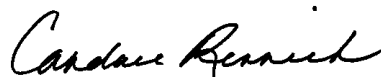
Dismissing and replacing Gilyar while she is on maternity leave is a shameful mark against the Ryerson Students' Union's claims to be dedicated to the principle of equity for all. As Dr. Akua Benjamin recently stated in a Toronto Star article about Gilyar Massa's case "You can't simply have lovely policies about equity and diversity... side by side with racism, Islamophobia and sexism."

CUPE Ontario supports the "I Stand with Gilyar" campaign, and supports the calls for her immediate reinstatement and compensation for the violation of her human rights. We will be working with other labour bodies, not just in Ontario but across Canada as a whole, to shed light on your unconscionable firing of Gilyar and to encourage them to join the "I Stand with Gilyar" campaign.

Sincerely,



Fred Hahn  
President  
CUPE Ontario



Candace Rennick  
Secretary-Treasurer  
CUPE Ontario

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