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Institute for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Societies (ISNO), The University Executive Board takes measures

To ensure the quality of teaching, research, and service and to restore the credibility of ISNO, the University of Bern has taken various measures. The lecturer who published the unacceptable X-postings will be terminated without notice. In addition, an administrative investigation of the entire institute has been initiated. During this investigation, the Institute Co-Director Serena Tolino will be relieved of her duties.

The University has been confronted with a case that is unprecedented and that has triggered an enormous response from the public. The X-postings published by a lecturer at the Institute for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Societies are unacceptable; the University condemns all kinds of violence and those who support it.

"The Executive Board of the University of Bern takes this matter very seriously. The events and circumstances at the institute are currently being clarified in detail. The aim is to ensure the quality of teaching, research, and service which benefits our students and staff as well as restore the credibility of the Institute," says Christian Leumann, Rector of the University of Bern.

Lecturer is terminated without notice

Based on a thorough assessment of the facts, it was already decided last week to suspend the ISNO lecturer who published the unacceptable postings on X with immediate effect until the consequences were finally clarified. Now the lecturer is terminated without notice. "The termination without notice is due to the intolerable behavior and the resulting loss of trust," explains Christoph Pappa, Secretary General of the University of Bern and Head of Legal Services.

Administrative investigation of the ISNO

As a further measure for quality assurance and to restore credibility, an administrative investigation of the ISNO has been initiated. In particular, the processes, positioning, and management of the institute will be subjected to an external evaluation, and the accusations made against the director will be clarified. This administrative investigation is being led by Prof. emeritus Antonio Loprieno, Ph.D. Antonio Loprieno is a former Rector of the University of Basel and former President of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences. "We are pleased to have found in Mr. Loprieno a very competent person for this challenging task. As an Egyptologist, he has a great deal of expertise

and is familiar with this field of research," says Rector Christian Leumann.

Until the investigation is completed, Institute Co-Director Serena Tolino will be suspended. This means that she will be relieved of her duties during this time, but must be available when the situation requires. For example, she will be available for the administrative investigation. "However, any further measures can only be taken based on a sound principle and in compliance with the legal framework," Christoph Pappa elaborates.

The administrative investigation is expected to take about two months. The results and subsequent measures will be communicated once the investigation has been completed. Antonio Loprieno will not be available for information during the investigation.

Teaching and research activities at ISNO

The leadership of the ISNO will be assumed by the second co-director, Prof. Nijmi Edres, until further notice. She will be supported in this task by the faculty. Operations at the ISNO will continue during the administrative investigation. "We are doing everything in our power to ensure that there are no adverse effects in terms of education, research activities, or work at the Institute," says Peter J. Schneemann, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Bern: "We are currently in the process of adequately compensating for the staff shortfalls and, in particular, reorganizing teaching and supervision relationships."

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