



University of  
Kentucky

FROM THE DESK OF PRESIDENT  
Eli Capilouto

Campus Community,

Below is a communication regarding an accident involving one of our students who was traveling abroad in the Middle East. Our thoughts and prayers are with the student's family and friends and our other students traveling. We will keep you informed as this very fluid situation continues to unfold.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UK student in swimming accident in Israel; search is ongoing

LEXINGTON, Ky. (July 29, 2018) – A University of Kentucky student studying abroad this summer in the Middle East is missing following a swimming accident this weekend in Tel Aviv, Israel.

The student, TeNiya Elnora Jones, 19, a sophomore from Ft. Myers, Fla., was swimming in the Mediterranean Sea Saturday evening with two other students. The students were studying in a program this summer focused on Arabic language.

The student group – seven UK students and two students from West Virginia University – was based in Amman, Jordan for the summer. Four students from the group – Jones and two other UK students along with one from West Virginia University – had traveled by bus from Amman to Tel Aviv for the weekend. Jones is majoring in biology and also studying Islamic Studies.

Shortly after midnight in Israel, three of the students went swimming in the Mediterranean Sea. One stayed behind in a Tel Aviv hotel.

One of the students involved in the swim reported that they got caught up in a strong current and were pulled out to sea. Two of the students were able to make it back to the shoreline. Jones did not.

The students called Israeli officials, who initiated a major search and rescue effort. The search and rescue mission is continuing.

“Our thoughts and prayers are with TeNiya, her family and the students and others impacted,” said UK President Eli Capilouto. “We are in continual contact with Teniya’s family, officials in Israel, officials from the State Department and our Congressional delegation, to provide all the support we can for the family, students and others involved. We will do everything possible to provide whatever support is needed.”

Following the accident, the students contacted UK Police and the program’s coordinator, the

Council on International Exchange, (CIEE) based in Portland, Maine. UK has previously worked with CIEE, a well-known education abroad provider. Education abroad involving university students is commonly coordinated by companies such as CIEE, who work with US and other universities and arrange travel, logistics and other accommodations.

Officials from the US Embassy in Israel also have been alerted and have been involved throughout the last 24 hours, communicating with Jones' family, CIEE and UK officials.

Late Saturday evening, CIEE officials contacted Jones' family to alert them to the situation. UK Education Abroad officials also contacted Jones' family and have remained in contact with them throughout the last 24 hours. UK officials also have been in touch with federal authorities in Washington and Israel regarding the accident.

UK Education Abroad officials are making arrangements for Jones' mother and grandfather to travel to Tel Aviv. Associate Provost Sue Roberts, who leads UK's International Center, home to Education Abroad and Exchanges, also is traveling to Tel Aviv to meet with the family and officials.

CIEE and UK officials are in contact with the other students in Tel Aviv, who are safe, and are arranging for them to travel back to Amman, Jordan as soon as possible. The families of all the students involved and, in the program, also have been contacted. The program, which began in June, is scheduled to be completed this week.

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Sincerely,

Eli Capilouto,  
President

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