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[www.soas.ac.uk](http://www.soas.ac.uk)

22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021

By email:

Dear Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng

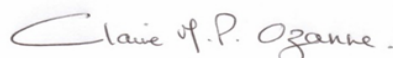
We are devastated to hear of the destruction caused to the University of Cape Town, particularly its library, by wildfire. We wish to express our sympathy and support to the UCT community who experienced utter shock and sadness at seeing parts of their campus consumed in flames.

A number of SOAS academics have close connections with universities in South Africa and this makes the loss even more close to home for many in our community.

The special collections held in the 200-year old Jagger Library were among the most important sources in Southern Africa for the study of the African continent across a number of different disciplines in the humanities, including archaeology, history, anthropology, literature, languages and linguistics. The holdings have long been a vital source for all scholars interested in the region's deeper and more recent past, as well as for those concerned with contemporary issues. UCT Special Collections was especially important for preserving records to promote work on Endangered African Languages – work which is closely associated with SOAS given our library holds a rich collection of visual and audio material.

The building itself was an attractive and welcoming home for several generations of scholars. The loss will be felt well beyond South Africa.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Claire P. Ozanne'.

Claire Ozanne  
Interim Director