Remembering Dr. Riad Ismat

Dr. Riad Ismat, a prominent scholar known for his contributions to Middle Eastern studies, passed away on April 6, 2021, due to a heart attack. Dr. Ismat was a critic of totalitarianism, condemning regimes that repress the freedom of expression. He wrote extensively about the ongoing Syrian conflict, and his work focused on theatre and Middle Eastern arts. In his own words, Dr. Ismat was aiming to "bridge the gap" between these arts and academia, underlining the need for cultural and educational exchange.

Dr. Ismat was a member of the Scholars at Risk (SAR) network, which is dedicated to protecting threatened scholars and supporting academic freedom worldwide. SAR works to provide emergency financial support, legal assistance, and other forms of aid to scholars facing threats to their academic freedom. SAR's efforts include advocating for the release of detained scholars, providing legal protection, and supporting research and publication.

Scholars at Risk operates a New Volunteer Proofreader Initiative, which provides assistance to scholars preparing CVs, syllabi, and other documents. The programme is led by a team of academic editors who volunteer their time after working hours, providing advice on content and style. They also offer feedback on the quality of the person's writing and their ability to write in English. The programme is designed to help scholars improve their academic writing skills and increase their chances of success in the academic job market.

In addition to providing proofreading services, SAR operates a Speaker Series, which features prominent scholars discussing their research and experiences. SAR also hosts outreach events, such as the Inspireurope outreach workshop, which brings together scholars and students to discuss issues of academic freedom.

SAR's initiatives are supported by a network of partners, including universities, think tanks, and non-profit organizations. The network operates in over 200 countries, providing support to threatened scholars worldwide.

SAR's work is important in protecting the freedom of expression and academic freedom. SAR's support for threatened scholars is crucial in maintaining academic excellence and ensuring the advancement of knowledge.

Click here to learn more about SAR's initiatives and how you can support their work.