Free to Think 2020: Virtual Conference Nov. 19-20

Join SAR on November 19-20 for "*Free to Think 2020: Responding to Attacks on Higher Education*," a virtual conference for the release of the annual *Free to Think* report. This year's report documents over 300 attacks on higher education communities worldwide, including violent attacks and killings, prosecutions and imprisonments, dismissals, crackdowns on student expression, the impact of COVID-19, and more. The conference will feature expert discussions on academic freedom issues in China and Hong Kong, India, Yemen, Turkey, and Eastern Europe, as well as shared experiences from SAR partners and SAR-assisted scholars.

Marking SAR's 20th anniversary, the conference will also include the presentation of the 2020 Courage to Think Award and a unique opportunity for SAR's global network to come together in solidarity. We invite you to share this with your wider networks and we look forward to seeing you at the conference next week.

Register Today »

Dr. Rahile Dawut honored with the 2020 Courage to Think Award

SAR is pleased to announce Dr. Rahile Dawut as the recipient of the 2020 Courage to Think Award. The award recognizes Dr. Dawut's work and that of all the scholars and students of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region who together struggle for academic freedom and freedom of opinion, expression, belief, association, and movement.

In December 2017, Dr. Dawut, a world-renowned scholar of Uyghur studies, told a relative of her plans to travel from Urumqi to Beijing. Shortly thereafter, her family and friends lost contact with her. It is suspected that she is held by state authorities at an undisclosed location. Human rights groups estimate that over a million Uyghurs and members of other ethnic minority communities are detained in so-called "re-education camps," including a growing number of scholars, students, and public intellectuals.

Dr. Dawut's daughter, Akeda Pulati, will accept the award on her mother's behalf at SAR's virtual conference, *Free to Think 2020: Responding to Attacks on Higher Education* on Thursday, November 19 at 11:00 am ET (3:00 pm GMT).

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Scholars of the Month

SAR scholars are at-risk higher education professionals who exemplify the pursuit of academic freedom, freedom of expression, and university values. If your institution is interested in hosting a SAR scholar, please email apply.scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu.

A Scholar of Sociology from Afghanistan

This scholar has a longstanding career as a researcher on gender and refugee populations. He has several years of experience working at universities and non-profit organizations in Afghanistan. He has published numerous academic articles in his field, and is currently expanding his research on refugee integration in Europe with a focus on male gender identities. He reports risk of harassment, surveillance, and threats of violence in Afghanistan, and seeks research opportunities in Europe beginning in January 2021. (Afghanistan 543)

A Scholar of Political Science from the Democratic Republic of Congo

This scholar has more than a decade of experience teaching at a university in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Specializing in conflict resolution and human rights, this scholar has significant research experience in universities and NGOs and has authored several articles on peace and conflict in Africa. He reports facing threats to his life in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and seeks research and/or teaching opportunities in Francophone Canada beginning June 2021. (Democratic Republic of Congo 570)

A Scholar of International Relations from Libya

This senior scholar specializes in Arab thought, political transitions, and post-conflict state building. He has several decades of experience conducting research and teaching at universities in Africa and the Middle East. Hehas authored numerous books and peer-reviewed academic articles on topics including state building and political transition in the Middle East. He reports threats of violence, arrest, and loss of position in Libya and seeks research and/or teaching opportunities in Europe beginning in January 2021. (Libya 527)

All Scholars Seeking Assistance »

Thank you, Kate! Welcome, Lisa!

It is with enormous gratitude for her leadership that we announce that Professor Catharine Stimpson will be ending her term as SAR Board Chair, effective December 1, 2020. Kate joined SAR as Chair of the SAR-NYU Advisory Board in 2004, guiding SAR's arrival into the NYU community and beyond. In 2006 she joined the SAR Board and chaired the Nominations and Governance Committee, helping to recruit SAR's many outstanding board members, including Jonathan Fanton, whom she then succeeded as Board Chair in 2016. As Chair, Kate led the development of SAR's 2018-23 strategic plan, which includes the establishment of SAR Europe, renewed commitment to core protection work for at-risk scholars, increased advocacy work, and new activities to promote higher education values. Kate's commitment to SAR's mission, network members, scholars, Board members, and staff is absolute and we are all the better for her leadership. We are therefore delighted that Kate will remain on the SAR Board, serving in a new position of Vice Chair, and as a member of the Board's Network and Membership Committee.

We are delighted that the SAR Board has elected Dr. Lisa Anderson as its new Chair. Lisa has been an active supporter of SAR since its founding, when she was Dean of Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. After a term as President of the American University in Cairo, Lisa returned to New York and soon joined the SAR Board. She has chaired or co-chaired SAR's Membership and Outreach Committee, Strategic Planning Committee, and Development Committee. She will continue to serve as Development Committee chair while chairing the Board, in recognition of the primary importance of development and sustainability to SAR's strategic plan and long-term ambitions.

"SAR has always been blessed by our board members," said Executive Director Rob Quinn. "They are, as a group, outstanding in accomplishment, intelligence, and commitment to our mission and the scholars we serve. I am so grateful to all of them, and especially now to Kate, for her leadership, mentorship, and friendship these many years, and to Lisa for her readiness to take up the challenge of leading SAR ever forward. With Kate and Lisa, the Board is in a formidable position to lead SAR into its next twenty years."

Measuring Academic Self-Censorship in the Arab region: Survey Launches Today

Academic freedom promotes quality in research and teaching. It allows all participants in higher education to pursue every line of inquiry and share their results. When it is lacking, academics may filter their work and expression, and self censor. SAR is partnering with Al Farabi Media on a new survey to determine the extent of academic self-censorship in the Arab region. Professors, researchers, lecturers, and students in or from the region are invited to complete the survey here, and to share the link with colleagues in their networks to encourage participation. (Researchers interested in partnering with SAR in deploying the survey in other regions are invited to contact us at scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu.)

UK Working group on Academic Freedom

The Academic Freedom and Internationalisation Working Group's (AFIWG) recently launched a model code of conduct designed to embed more transparency and accountability in the UK universities' international activities. This is to ensure that concerns about risks to academic freedom are heard, understood, and mitigated. The group has warned that although international links can benefit universities and researchers, they can also threaten the academic freedom of UK-based academics and students and their academic partners involved in transnational activity. SAR welcomes this new initiative, and supports the UK working group in their efforts to address this need. We hope this work will provide a model to related national efforts in Europe and around the world.

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Vivian G. Prins Speaker Series at the Freedom Project

Apart from being a public health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects on human rights and freedoms throughout the world. Several authoritarian regimes have exploited the crisis to entrench unchecked power, attack critics, and stifle freedom of speech and expression.

Join Scholar at Risk's partner, the Freedom Project, for a timely, power-packed panel on December 8th at 3:30 pm EST. The panel features Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth, and journalists and human rights campaigners, Dr. Mubashar Hasan and Ms. Farai Gonzo, who will reflect on the ways in which state-sponsored repression has grown under the cover of the global pandemic.

Register Today »

Events

Security and Risk Management in Higher Education: Protecting Universities from Hostile Actors I November 11-12, 2020 I Virtual

Political and public interest in security-related risks and the threat of interference is growing. The risk environment is dynamic, and complex. In October 2020, UUK published new guidelines on these issues and in this two-day online conference will explore the topic in-depth. On the first day, one panel will look at how institutions can protect the academic freedom required to discuss and investigate topics, whilst ensuring that appropriate safeguards remain in place.

Register Today »

Free to Think 2020: Virtual Conference I November 19, 2020 I Virtual

Scholars at Risk invites participation in a virtual conference marking SAR's 20th anniversary and the release of our annual monitoring report, *Free to Think 2020*. The report draws on data from SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, which documented more than 300 attacks on higher education between September 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020. The event will also feature the presentation of SAR's 2020 Courage to Think Award.

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Universities responding to forced displacement – Challenges and Opportunities, I November 25, 2020 I Virtual

UNICA member institutions from different regions of Europe will present higher education initiatives that address the challenge of forced displacement of academic staff. Presenters will include the University of Oslo, University College Dublin, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, and National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

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CONAHEC-AMPEI Joint Virtual International Education Conference I December 1, 2020 I Virtual

CONAHEC-AMPEI invites participation in its Joint Virtual International Education Conference. Together these two organizations will reassert the value of international academic relationships and engagement in higher ed and forge a more resilient platform and proactive agenda for future collaboration. Scholars At Risk member institutions are welcome to use the code partner2020 during registration to receive a 25% discount.

Register Today »

The Fate Of Freedom In A Global Pandemic I December 8, 2020 I Virtual

Join Scholar at Risk's partner, the Freedom Project, for a timely, power-packed panel on December 8th at 3:30 pm EST. The panel features Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, Kenneth Roth, and journalists and human rights campaigners, Dr. Mubashar Hasan and Ms. Farai Gonzo, who will reflect on the ways in which state-sponsored repression has grown under the cover of the global pandemic.

Learn More »

Inspireurope webinar on Hosting Researchers at Risk: How employers and hosts can help researchers make the most of their stay I December 9, 2020 I Virtual

On December 9th at 10am CET, the Inspireurope project will host the next webinar in its series on preparing the work environment for researchers at risk. Discussions will focus on the ways in which employers and academic hosts can help researchers make the most of their stay. This webinar is free of charge but registration is required.

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