SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK
protection advocacy learning
20 YEARS

Defending the human rights of scholars and protecting academic freedom worldwide

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Reflections From First-Time Hosts: EPFL

École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL)'s hosting engagement began in 2018 thanks to our collaboration with the Swiss Commission for UNESCO and the advocacy of Commission members. To begin, we had two priorities. First, we had to assess the EPFL community's interest. Then we had to mobilize the necessary funds. I met with all the faculty deans and a number of other scientists. They were motivated but also concerned about the long-term instability that academics would continue to face. In this moment, I remembered the reassuring message from Prof. Jan Hesthaven, former Dean of the Faculty of Basic Sciences and EPFL's Provost: "No one can question the relevance of SAR's mission."

SAR nominated several scholars from various disciplines and country contexts for our consideration. It was clear that they all were facing difficult situations and that a possible placement at a SAR member university in Europe would enable them to safely resume their academic career with hope for the future. [...]

The response from the EPFL community has been overwhelmingly positive and shows who we are as a university and as individuals, and publicly reaffirms our commitment to academic freedom, critical thinking, and the basic right to education and scientific progress in secure environments.

Read Dr. Gabriela Tejada's full reflection from EPFL»

Free Dr. Abdul Jalil Al-Singace!

SAR calls for support of Dr. Abdul Jalil Al-Singace, a scholar of mechanical engineering who has been on a hunger strike for over six months in Bahrain's Jau Prison. On Saturday, January 15, Dr. Al-Singace will spend his 60th birthday behind bars, serving a life sentence in apparent retaliation for his participation in a pro-democracy protest in 2011. Since his arrest almost 11 years ago, Dr. Al-Singace has been subject to ill treatment and torture, exacerbating his pre-existing health conditions, including post-polio syndrome.

On July 8, 2021, Dr. Al-Singace began the hunger strike to protest his ill-treatment and demand the return to his family a book on Bahraini dialects he wrote while in prison that was confiscated by prison authorities. Since then, Dr. Al-Singace has lost a severe amount of weight and his overall health has deteriorated dramatically. Sign this letter to demand Dr. Al-Singace's immediate release to receive the medical care he urgently needs.

Take Action »

Scholars Seeking Hosts

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 Economics and Human Rights Defender from Afghanistan

This scholar (MBA + MA) and human rights defender specializes in corruption, good governance, and electoral politics. Until recently he held a leadership position at a university in Afghanistan and served on the Board of Directors of a nonprofit that advances the development of democracy and human rights. He reports targeted risk due to his previous high-profile human rights work, including on women's empowerment, and seeks research and/or teaching opportunities in the US beginning immediately. This candidate is eligible for placement co-funding through SAR's Practitioner-at-Risk

A Scholar of Mechanical Engineering from Iran

This scholar specializes in nanoscale heat transfer and has a robust research portfolio and several years of experience conducting research at universities in the Middle East and Asia. He also has several years of teaching experience, including on topics such as heat transfer, thermodynamics, and fluid mechanics. He reports risk of arrest in Iran and seeks research and/or teaching opportunities in Australia beginning immediately. (Iran 845)

A Scholar of Education from Turkey

This scholar specializes in analytical and pharmaceutical chemistry. She has over 10 years of teaching and research experience engaging with Turkish academic institutions and a US-based university on topics of analytical and pharmacological chemistry, drug analysis techniques, and analytical method validation. An active researcher, she has authored several publications in the field of chemistry, focusing her work primarily on quantity analysis in pharmacological preparations. She reports loss of position, risk of arrest, and prosecution in Turkey following the July 2016 coup attempt and seeks research opportunities in the

program. (Afghanistan 785)

Netherlands beginning immediately. (Turkey 1732)

All Scholars Seeking Assistance »

Season 2: Free to Think Podcast

Join SAR Executive Director Rob Quinn for Season 2 of the Free to Think podcast. Rob talks with guests whose work falls at the always sensitive intersection of power and ideas. This season, we have episodes on hostage diplomacy, gender and academic freedom in Brazil, and most recently, first-hand accounts of faculty protests at Boğaziçi University in Turkey.

"I was, I guess, instrumental to some extent in making whatever w campus more visible. And that is one reason I think why I was targeted. They wanted to silence us."

– Can Candan, documentary filmmaker and academic, on being dismissed from Boğaziçi University. Season 2, Episode 17. Protests pictured left.

Listen to season 2 of the podcast »

Contribute to the EC Public Consultation

The European Commission has launched a consultation inviting submissions on the rule of law across its 27 Member States. A resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 24 June 2021 expanded the report's scope to include explicitly all aspects of freedom of expression, including academic freedom. SAR encourages wide participation to insert data and information on infringements on academic freedom and university autonomy to ensure the report effectively captures threats to students and academics across Europe and to academic freedom more generally. The information received will feed into the Commission's 2022 Rule of Law Report, the third in a series of reports at the centre of the Commission's Rule of Law Mechanism. . Importantly, this year's eport will for the first time contain specific recommendations for Member States. The consultation is available online until 24 January 2022. Please contact sareurope@mu.ie if interested in coordinating or contributing to a submission.

SAR in Conversation with the GCHR

The Global Campus of Human Rights talked with Executive Director Rob Quinn about SAR's global collaboration and the network's efforts to support Afghan scholars.

"Our project is not about conversion, not about convincing people. We know that there are already people in higher education communities all over the world who believe in

academic freedom, and understand why it matters. And we have known from the very beginning that universities have always taken in refugee or exiled colleagues facing threats. Our job at Scholars at Risk is to connect with these organic, local efforts; to link them in the form of a global network; and together to bring support to those in places where colleagues and academic freedom are under the most pressure."

Read the full piece »

SAR Annual Report Goes Digital

SAR's recently released Annual Report 2020-2021 is now digital, providing easy access to SAR's work on protecting threatened scholars and promoting everyone's freedom to think, question, and share ideas. The report features SAR-assisted scholars with an outline of the SAR Network's accomplishments and growth over the last year in each of SAR's three program areas: protection, advocacy, and research and learning.

We could not do this work without the global SAR community and we begin 2022 deeply grateful for your continued support. We hope you feel a sense of pride in all that we have accomplished together and invite you to share this the report widely with your friends, families, and networks.

Read the report »

News & Events

Reimagining Academic Freedom – Open Society University Network Global Observatory on Academic Freedom First Bi-Annual Conference | Jan 20, 2022

The GOAF First Bi-Annual Conference will launch the work of the Global Observatory on Academic Freedom. The findings of the Annual Report 2020/2021 and accompanying papers will be presented at the conference while offering opportunities to liaise with the academic community, including researchers in the field as well as relevant policy makers and students.

Learn More »

SAR United States | How to Host Workshop | Feb 11, 2022

The SAR United States section will host a workshop designed to offer guidance to SAR member hosts so that we can engage on the basics of hosting scholars, discuss questions that may arise before, during, and after a placement, and brainstorm together about the ways in which the network can best support scholars in the United States.

Read More »

Inspireurope Stakeholder Forum 2022 | May 3, 2022

The 2022 Inspireurope Stakeholder Forum will take place in Berlin on May 2nd – 3rd, 2022. It will be hosted by Inspireurope partner, the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation. Inspireurope is an initiative to support, promote, and integrate researchers at risk in Europe. Programme and registration details to be released in early 2022.

Learn More»

Connect with Us

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Scholars at Risk is an independent not-for-profit corporation, hosted at New York University. Our international network of institutions and individuals shares a mission to protect threatened scholars, promote academic freedom, and prevent attacks on higher education communities around the world.

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