In Solidarity with Ukraine

In Solidarity with Ukraine:
Join SAR’s efforts to support and assist the higher education community affected by Russia’s assault on Ukraine.

SAR Network members and partners around the world are responding with extraordinary energy and generosity to support Ukrainian colleagues and the countless others impacted by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. SAR’s statement of solidarity draws attention to the key areas of concern. As we receive new requests for assistance from individual Ukrainian scholars, we will reach out to network members that have indicated an ability to host. Given the urgency of the crisis, we also expect and encourage institutions to self-identify candidates for hosting, including from inquiries received directly from scholars or nominated by close colleagues. SAR will share on our website and future newsletters resources to assist network members working across their institutions to prepare such hosting opportunities, and we invite partners across the network to share information and resources for inclusion in these lists. Finally, even as we race to meet the current crisis, we will continue our work to help scholars around the world – whenever and wherever they may be at risk – and we invite continued interest from network members in arranging hosting opportunities for these colleagues as well.

Network Reflections: NTNU
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)’s engagement with Scholars at Risk began in 2011 with the Norwegian rectors’ formation of a national
section. Since then, NTNU has hosted eight scholars from Iran, Eritrea, Turkey, Syria, Yemen, and Pakistan. Our most important contribution is to provide an inclusive work environment and to meet the scholars with support and curiosity. They give a human face to serious challenges in the world and remind us of the importance of defending basic university values which we otherwise tend to take for granted. In return, faculty and students may gain new academic perspectives and insights from the scholars’ life experiences. In the bigger picture, NTNU’s contribution is a drop in the bucket. It is nevertheless an act of solidarity in line with the university’s vision – knowledge for a better world.

Kristin Wergeland Brekke, Senior Adviser, HR Division Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Norway March 2022

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 Architecture from Afghanistan
This scholar specializes in architecture and civil engineering. Her recent work studies the conservation of old

A Scholar of International Relations from Iran
This scholar of international relations specializes in defense and strategic studies, and has spent several years conducting research at

A Scholar of Materials Science and Engineering from Syria
This scholar of materials science and engineering specializes in ceramic processing and the modeling of
buildings through modernization and adaptive reuse. She also has numerous years of university teaching experience, including courses on the history and theory of architecture, technical drawing, physics, and calculus. She reports loss of funding for her doctoral program and risk as a female academic following the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan and seeks research and/or teaching opportunities beginning immediately. (Afghanistan 1883)

institutions in the Middle East and Canada. His recent publications have focused on foreign policy, nuclear proliferation, and defense mechanisms in the Middle East, among other topics. He reports facing harassment and threats to his career in Iran. He is seeking research opportunities in Ottawa beginning immediately. (Iran 805)

microstructures in stochastic schemes. He has extensive university experience lecturing on various topics including materials science, materials properties, ceramics, and programming, among others. He reports previous arrest, detention, and continued threats to his career in Syria. He is seeking research opportunities beginning immediately. (Syria 986)

All Scholars Seeking Assistance »

Mellon/SAR Academic Freedom Fellows

Made possible by the generous support and partnership of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Mellon/SAR Academic Freedom Workshop and Fellowship program provides a research stipend and supportive professional community for researchers to develop and share work on academic freedom and/or related higher education values. Over the course of the eight-month program through June 2022, fellows complete their proposed project and participate in regular virtual workshop sessions, including sharing the results of their work with the wider SAR community.
Academic Freedom Index 2022

The 2022 Academic Freedom Index (AFI) is out now, and reports on academic freedom in 177 countries and territories. This year’s report, led by researchers at the University of Gothenburg and FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg, finds almost 2 out of 5 people live in a country facing a decline in academic freedom, including Brazil, Russia, and the United States. In 2020, the Global Public Policy Institute, in close collaboration with Scholars at Risk, published policy recommendations on how to use the AFI as a tool for higher education communities, research funders, advocacy groups and parliaments to guide their decision-making to protect academic freedom.”

Read the Academic Freedom Index 2022»

Restore Institutional Autonomy in Nicaragua

Scholars at Risk sent a letter to Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and the National Council of Universities. This was in response to the Nicaraguan National Assembly voting to strip the operating licenses of five of Nicaragua’s leading academic institutions, and giving control of their operations to the government. Collectively, these universities enroll over 14,000 students.

In the letter, SAR urges state authorities to restore institutional autonomy, reinstate its university leadership, and ensure that university decisions remain with members of the higher education community.

Read the letter »

An Afghan Scholar Resumes Life in Ireland
“When I heard that the government collapsed. . .I was thinking ‘we lost 20 years of achievements. . .That was a very hard time.’” - Dr. Aziz Mohibbi

Free to Think talks with Dr. Aziz Mohibbi, an environmental engineer and former chancellor of Afghanistan’s Bamyan University, about his recent relocation to Ireland following the return of the Taliban, and Dr. Roja Fazaeli, an Associate Professor of Islamic Civilization, Near & Middle Eastern Studies at Trinity College, Dublin, who helped to arrange his visit.

Dr. Mohibbi shares his work building up Afghanistan’s education system, his flight from Afghanistan, and how he and his family are settling into life in Ireland. Dr. Fazaeli shares a behind-the-scenes look at how SAR members Trinity College Dublin and Maynooth University, together with partners at the IIE Scholar Rescue Fund and beyond, raced to create an opportunity for an Afghan scholar, and ended up with a new colleague and new friends.

Listen Here »

News & Events

Student Advocacy Day: Congressional Advocacy Workshop | March 22, 2022

Scholars at Risk’s annual event, US Student Advocacy Days, brings together students and faculty from Student Advocacy Seminars
across the United States for training on best practices in advocacy on behalf of imprisoned scholars. As part of this year’s event, SAR is pleased to offer a 2-hour virtual training on US Congressional advocacy. on March 22, at 1:00 EST. This training will prepare students for an April 7-8 visit to Washington, DC, where students and SAR staff will meet with members of Congress regarding scholars’ cases. Students and faculty across the network are invited to join the virtual component. Pre-registration is required.

To learn more, or to start a Student Advocacy Seminar, contact Clare Robinson at clare.robinson@nyu.edu.

Webinar: Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas | March 23, 2022

The Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas / Coalición por la Libertad Académica en las Américas (CAFA / CLAA) will be hosting a webinar on March 23 at 12:00 EST to discuss major recent developments concerning academic freedom in the Americas, and to build momentum for increased protection and greater understanding of academic freedom and related rights. This event is open to the public.

Inspireurope Regional Outreach Workshop, Southern Europe | March 31, 2022

The Inspireurope project’s Regional Outreach Workshop, Southern Europe will be held on 31 March, 2022 at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece (venue: Aristotle University Research Dissemination Center-KEDEA). The Workshop aims to increase awareness with key stakeholders in Greece and surrounding countries and provide opportunities to get involved in activities to support researchers at risk.

Call for applications: UN SR on the right to education | Deadline: April 6, 2022

The Secretariat of the United Nations Human Rights Council has announced a call for applications for eight vacancies of independent
United Nations experts of the Council, including the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education. Application materials and additional information are available here. Note that individual applications must be submitted and received by April 6 at 12 noon Geneva time. Please share with your networks!

Inspireurope Philipp Schwartz Initiative Stakeholder Forum | May 10, 2022

The 2022 Inspireurope Stakeholder Forum will take place in Berlin on May 10-11, 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.

SAR Italy – International Conference | June 22, 2022

The international conference is to take place in Padua on the 800th anniversary of the University of Padua. Details to follow.

Geneva Summer Schools: Sustainability Activism | June 7 - 11, 2022

Join a class on sustainability activism offered by the the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Environmental Governance and Territorial Development Institute in collaboration with Right Livelihood and the University of Zürich. The target audience includes both MA and PhD-level university students interested in sustainability activism as well as a small number of places with scholarships for grassroots activists who are interested in deepening their understanding and practice. (University enrollment is not a requirement).

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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