Monthly Newsletter

DECEMBER 2022

Annual Report — "Our network is stronger than ever"

"Despite historic challenges, we learned this year that our network is stronger than ever. We have helped more scholars than ever find safety. More institutions are coming forward, saying "Yes, we can do more." More individuals are asking "How can we help?" And we are just getting started." - Robert Quinn, SAR Executive Director

SAR’s recently released Annual Report 2021-2022 provides a summary of SAR’s work 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 as 2022 comes to a close, we are filled with deep gratitude for your continued support. We hope you feel a sense of pride in all that we have achieved together and invite you to share this report widely with your friends, families, and networks. Read the report »

Share your input! SAR Strategic Planning 2023-2028
As SAR’s Executive Director Robert Quinn says, “there has never been a better time to protect academic freedom.” But we need your help! Please take 10 minutes to complete SAR’s strategic planning survey today.

Every five years, SAR’s governing board prepares a strategic plan to guide the network’s growth and activities. The current plan ends August 31st. The new plan (2023-28) will be drafted during the first half of 2023 and begin on September 1st. We invite all SAR stakeholders to share their input by completing this online survey. (Responses will be recorded anonymously. SAR will not collect any personal data, unless you choose to provide it.) We will share results and other opportunities to contribute to strategic planning in future newsletters. Take the survey >

Thank you for your participation, and all your support!

Call for applications: SAR Ukraine Fellowships

SAR Ukraine Fellowships
Fellowships for North American institutions to host at-risk scholars from Ukraine

SAR is pleased to announce new fellowship support for SAR network member institutions in North America looking to host threatened and displaced scholars from Ukraine. The purpose of the funds is to support the Ukrainian research and academic sector, enable continuing collaborations between scholars and institutions in or displaced from Ukraine and the
international research community, and to anticipate and support the rebuilding of the Ukrainian higher education and research sectors as conditions permit. This support is made possible by the generous partnership of Wiley, a global leader in publishing, education, and research. For more information visit the SAR Ukraine fellowships webpage and subscribe here. Learn more >

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 HostingatSAR@nyu.edu.

A Scholar of Civil Engineering
This scholar holds a master's degree in civil engineering and is completing her PhD thesis on soil stabilization for highway construction. She has 10 years of university teaching experience in soil and rock mechanics, applied hydrology, soil and foundation, engineering statistics, and GIS. She has also published several academic papers on soil engineering. This scholar reports risk from the Taliban due to her work with international organizations and her ethnicity. She is seeking a research position in a safe location beginning immediately. [Afghanistan-1072]

A Scholar of Agriculture
This scholar specializes in plant breeding and has several years of experience in higher education in Ethiopia. She has a strong research record with multiple peer-reviewed publications in international journals, and her recent work focuses on the new multipurpose crop teff. Much of her work includes service to the community, a fact noted and applauded by references who comment on her active participation in the field and success in being awarded research grants. She reports previous detentions and threats to her life due to her Tigray identity and the conflict in Ethiopia. She is in Ethiopia and is seeking research opportunities in a safe location beginning immediately. [Ethiopia-745]

A Scholar of Education and ICT
This scholar has a PhD in computer science and over 20 years of academic teaching and research experience in the intersection of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and education. In her most recent dissertation for a DSc program, she focused on the improvement of professional training for teachers in Ukraine, specifically for tutoring and
distance learning. Supplementing her strong lecturing and publication background is her leadership in university programs to support women in STEM. She reports risk due to the ongoing war in Ukraine and is currently in Germany, seeking teaching or research opportunities in a safe location beginning in March 2023. [Ukraine-657]

SEE ALL SCHOLARS >

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**Justice for Professor Gokarakonda Naga Saibaba!**

On December 5, SAR and 18 other human rights organizations signed a joint letter of appeal to Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud, the Chief Justice of India, calling for the release of Professor Gokarakonda Naga Saibaba. Professor Saibaba is an English professor at Delhi University and a human rights activist who is serving a life sentence.

On October 14, 2022, the Bombay High Court ordered Professor Saibaba released based on a procedural lapse during his prosecution. The following day, however, the Supreme Court suspended the ruling. SAR and partners asked the Chief Justice to review Professor Saibaba's case, reconsider the decision to suspend the Bombay High Court's release order, and reinstate the high court's order. You can join in support for Professor Saibaba by signing this letter. **Take action »**

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**Important update on MSCA4Ukraine scheme**

On behalf of the **MSCA4Ukraine project partners**, SAR Europe thanks researchers from Ukraine and prospective host organisations for their applications to the MSCA4Ukraine scheme. By the scheme’s first cut-off date of November 11, over 400 applications were received from 28 countries.

Due to the large response, it is likely that funding will be committed on the basis of applications received by the first cut-off date. Therefore, the MSCA4Ukraine project partners closed the portal on November 25th and it will remain closed until further notice.

An additional 198 applications were received after the first cut-off date and before the closure of the portal on November 25. Applications submitted during this period will only be evaluated if funding remains after the selection of applications received by the first cut-off date of November
11. In the unlikely case that there is still funding available after the first two rounds of evaluation, the portal will reopen for new applications in early 2023.

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**Welcoming Mellon/SAR Academic Freedom Fellows**

**2022-2023** Mellon/SAR Academic Freedom Fellows

Dinesha Samararatne  
Sri Lanka

Last Alfandika  
Zimbabwe

Nwet Kay Khine  
Myanmar

Job Mwaura  
South Africa

Khoo Ying Hoi  
Malaysia

Chika Muli  
Ghana

SAR warmly welcomes the 2022-2023 cohort of 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 2023, fellows complete their proposed project and participate in regular virtual workshop sessions, including sharing the results of their work with the wider SAR community.

[Read about each fellow & their project »](#)

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**First Conference about Academic Freedom in the Americas at the University of Monterrey, Mexico**
The First Conference about Academic Freedom in the Americas, organized by CAFA, was held November 10 - 11 at the University of Monterrey, Mexico. The conference featured panels on academic freedom concerns in the region, notably in Brazil, Mexico, the United States, and Venezuela.

Other topics included the effects of gender violence on higher education communities, and the impact of censorship and legislative interference on the higher education sector. Panelists addressed responses to these concerns, including how to implement the Inter-American Principles on Academic Freedom and University Autonomy within the region.

Video recordings of the conference are now available! Access them here: November 10 and November 11.

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**Best practices & critical dialogue at inaugural SAR US General Assembly in New Orleans, Louisiana**

Thank you to those who attended the inaugural SAR United States General Assembly last week at Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans! Over the course of two days, 50 representatives from higher education institutions and associations from over 20 states gathered to begin the groundwork for discussing the SAR United States agenda for the coming years, exchanging best practices for hosting scholars and promoting academic freedom, and engaging in critical conversations about equity, representation, mental health, resiliency, and the role of higher education in defending democracy. Stay tuned for a post-meeting report with a summary of the presentations, workshops, and key takeaways.
Listen to remarks by US Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, at the 2022 Scholars at Risk Network U.S. General Assembly:

SAR in Brussels to discuss academic freedom

To coincide with the release of the Free to Think 2022 report, SAR Europe’s Advocacy Manager Denise Roche and SAR’s Senior Advocacy Officer Daniel Munier were in Brussels, Belgium on November 30 for a series of meetings facilitated by the European External Action Service (EEAS). They met with the Head of the Human Rights Division of the EEAS to discuss the importance of integrating academic freedom within the EU’s human rights and political country dialogues, and addressed the EU Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM). COHOM includes
representatives from the 27 EU Member States and is responsible for shaping the EU’s position on human rights in the EU’s foreign policy. Questions and statements of support for academic freedom were provided by Ireland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Lithuania and Bulgaria.

Following the COHOM meeting, Denise and Dan provided an introduction to academic freedom and an overview of Free to Think to staff of the human rights unit of the EEAS, and select geographical desks including Russia, Turkey, Indonesia, and China.

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**News and events**

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**Afghan Challenge Fund Call for Proposals | Deadline: January 15, 2023**

The OSUN Threatened Scholars Integration Initiative seeks applications for its Afghan Challenge Fund Initiative, which offers fellowships for newly arrived Afghans in the US, Canada, and the United Kingdom whose research, teaching, and public work have placed them in critical danger and whose continued activity is valuable for the future of their country and society. Hosts may be either higher education institutions or civil society organizations, including NGOs, art and media organizations. Candidates and their proposed hosts should submit joint applications by January 15.  
[Read more »]

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**Free Online Course on Academic Freedom | March 6, 2023**

Are some questions too dangerous to ask? What happens to scholars and students who ask those questions? These are among the questions we will discuss in “Dangerous Questions: Why Academic Freedom Matters,” a free online course created by the Academic Refuge project. This course run begins on March 6, 2023 and is free and available to anyone with internet access. The material is divided into 3 weeks with an expected workload of 3 hours per week. Once registered, participants will have access to the course for five weeks.  
[Register today »]
Student Advocacy Days, Washington DC, United States | March 29-30, 2023
Scholars at Risk’s annual US Student Advocacy Days will convene faculty and students in Washington, DC, to receive training and seek meetings with government representatives to raise awareness about wrongfully detained scholars and students.
Read more »

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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