JANUARY 2023

Deepest gratitude to our community of supporters

We would like to begin the New Year by extending our deepest gratitude to our community of supporters. With your generous contributions, we are able to address the growing demand for our services—to help more scholars, to grow our monitoring and advocacy work, and to build dialogue to strengthen universities around the world. Thank you for being a part of our community and continuing to protect threatened scholars and defend academic freedom!

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

SAR Ukraine Fellowships

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

SAR encourages applications by network member institutions in North America seeking funding 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 and to apply, visit the SAR Ukraine fellowships webpage. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis starting January 17, 2023. Learn more »
New information-sharing drop-in sessions for SAR network members

On February 16th, SAR will be offering a new opportunity for connection and discussion within the network: **Information-sharing drop-in sessions** ("drop-ins") for network members.

Recognizing the substantial experience and activity across the network, these bi-weekly, virtual drop-in sessions are intended to increase information-sharing across the network, and with the SAR secretariat.

SAR staff will convene the sessions roughly every other week for ~30-60 minutes. We hope to create an informal, informative, and practical space for network members and partners to ask questions and to share information, experience, good practices, and resources. So grab a coffee and join us if:

- You have a question to ask of other network members,
- You have an update to share on activities on your campus/in your area,
- You just want to listen to what other members are experiencing,
- You want to contribute to the informal discussions as they develop

The first two sessions will be held on:

- Thursday, February 16th at 5 pm CEST/ 10 am EST/ 7 am PST [register here](#)
- Thursday, March 2nd at 8 pm CEST/ 1 pm EST/ 10 am PST [register here](#)

Sessions will be held roughly every two weeks, on the first and third Thursdays of the month. A preliminary schedule of sessions will be on SAR’s events page.

Please share the schedule with others at your institution who may have experience or announcements to share or questions about hosting scholars, events, or other SAR-related activities.

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**Share your input! SAR Strategic Planning 2023-2028**
As SAR's Executive Director Rob 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!

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 Persian Literature
This scholar is in her final year of a PhD program in Persian literature at a university in Iran, where she is writing her dissertation on the evolution of a feminine writing tradition in Afghan fiction. She has been a professor of Dari/Persian literature at a university in Afghanistan for over 20 years, teaching courses on prose context, technical prose, contemporary literature, and semantics. This scholar also founded an organization in Afghanistan that provides help to vulnerable women and was chair of her local women's council. She reports risk due to her
social activism and is seeking a research position in a safe place beginning as soon as possible. (Afghanistan-1462)

A Scholar of Islamic Law and Political Science
This scholar holds a master's degree in Islamic law and jurisprudence and is currently enrolled in an online PhD program in political science. He has been an assistant professor for nine years, teaching courses on Islamic culture and law. His current research focuses on elections in Afghanistan. He also worked for Afghanistan's Ministry of Higher Education for several years, managing international partnerships and scholarships. This scholar faces risk due to his work promoting democracy and collaboration with international partners. He is seeking a research position in a safe place beginning as soon as possible. (Afghanistan-2070)

A Scholar of Biochemistry
This scholar of bio- and organic chemistry has a special research interest in the design and synthesis of tetracyclic compounds, including their use as antidepressant agents. He has taught biochemistry courses at multiple universities in Yemen since 2018. This scholar's academic career has largely been focused on research, evidenced by his robust publication background and credit as a co-inventor on several compound patents. He reports risk due to the ongoing civil conflict in Yemen and is seeking a research position in a safe location beginning as soon as possible. (Yemen-796)

SEE ALL SCHOLARS >

In solidarity with women and girls in Afghanistan

On December 21, the Taliban cast another devastating blow to human rights by banning Afghan women and girls from higher education. SAR’s Executive Director Rob Quinn joined worldwide demands for immediate and sustained responses, calling on all sectors of the international community to “push back with every diplomatic means available.”
But absent an unimaginable reversal of [these] policies toward women, the most effective response must be an immediate, massive, worldwide expansion of remote and in-person fellowship, scholarship, and study opportunities for Afghan women and girls....SAR thanks every higher education institution that is already....helping Afghan scholars and students, and calls on higher education institutions everywhere to do the same.”

Network Reflection: Council for At-Risk Academics

cara
a lifeline to academics at risk

“I think we are seeing a much wider appreciation generally of the vital importance of rescuing academics from danger and making it possible for them to continue their work.

Since September 2022 we have been working with SAR and others in the EU’s latest ‘Inspireurope+’ programme, which will strengthen and coordinate support in Europe for researchers at risk. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the sight of shell-damaged universities here in Europe further galvanised opinion in 2022, leading to the establishment in the UK of a new ‘Researchers at Risk’ scheme last March, specifically for Ukrainian researchers, funded by some £13m of UK Government money with support also from other institutions.

All this, of course, is alongside Cara’s regular work – and while much of that is inevitably now also focused on Afghanistan and Ukraine, we are still receiving many appeals for help from scholars in danger in other countries too, who need and deserve help, including a growing number from scholars in Russia who want no part of what is being done in their name.”

Stephen Wordsworth, Executive Director, Council for At-Risk Academics (Cara)
Read the full piece »

Are you a SAR Network member interested in writing a Network Reflection? We would love to hear from you. Please email us at scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu.

Remote fellowships & academic publishing webinars

Inspireurope+
Supporting Researchers at Risk

In December 2022 the EU-funded inspireurope+ project, coordinated by SAR Europe at Maynooth University, held its first two webinars. These webinars engaged project actions on guidance and support for researchers at risk, as well as on building institutional capacity and preparedness.

Remote Fellowships for Researchers at Risk
The Inspireurope+ webinar on remote fellowships for researchers at risk was hosted on 8 December 8th by the European University Association (EUA) and moderated by the University of Gothenburg. The webinar considered how remote fellowships might benefit at-risk scholars
who for various reasons cannot travel, as well as institutions without the possibility to provide a physical academic sanctuary on their campus. Reflections were shared by a Researcher at Risk, and experiences were examined at Wilfrid Laurier University, Freie Universität Berlin, and the University of Copenhagen.

Learn more and watch the recording »

Publication Strategies for Researchers at Risk
The Inspireurope+ webinar on publishing in peer-reviewed journals was hosted on 6 December 6th by Cara (the Council for At-Risk Academics). The webinar addressed actions publishers are taking to support researchers at risk and identified recommendations for writing for a peer-reviewed journal specific to researchers at risk. The speakers, Dr. Wafa Kashbour, Dr. Harry Shirley, and Professor David Neal, shared resources and advice for peer-reviewed publication.

Learn more and watch the recording »

Students continue to shape SAR's advocacy efforts

With the close of last semester, we thank and appreciate all of our Student Advocacy Seminar and Legal Clinic partners. Collectively, the students and their faculty have raised awareness about wrongly imprisoned scholars from Iran, Egypt, Belarus, China, and India by engaging in social media and visual campaigns, holding petition drives within their campus communities, creating partnerships with fellow advocates, and reaching out to governmental officials on behalf of the needs of the detained scholars. Clinical partners have contributed to submissions to the United Nations and Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Each and every effort proved to be of vital assistance to SAR’s ongoing advocacy efforts.

Many thanks to all students and their faculty in Canada: Carleton University, University of British Columbia, and University of Ottawa; Italy: University of Torino, University of Trento; UK: University of Nottingham; USA: Endicott College, Fairfield University, Muhlenberg College, Roger Williams University, UC Santa Barbara, University of Dayton, University of Nebraska - Omaha, and the Open Society University Network (led by Bard College Berlin).

Next spring, we look forward to student advocacy continuing with an additional eight universities from across North America and Europe joining the program, as well as gathering student advocates in Washington, DC, on March 29-30 for the 6th annual US Student Advocacy Days.
In DC, students will participate in advocacy workshops and hold meetings with members of Congress, and members of civil society.

In Malaysia, UMANY members had published an online statement opposing the king’s rejection of the government’s proposed response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They were threatened to be raped, killed, and thrown acid on them and their families.

In China, Professor Tohti promoted dialogue between Uyghur and Han Chinese through his website and through proposals he submitted to the Chinese government. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

In Egypt, Patrick George Zaki is pursuing an Master’s Degree in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Bologna. He conducts research and advocacy on gender issues and human rights for the Cairo-based Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights. Zaki has been detained in Egypt since February 7, 2020 and be tortured in prison. After being postponed for many times, his final trial will be on Feb. 28.

In Yemen, Khalid al-Hameidi, dean of the University of Aden’s College of Education, was a secular thinker and a known critic of Islamic extremists. He was shot and killed.

In Vietnam, Pham Dinh Quy, a professor at Ton Duc Thang University, published articles criticizing a local Communist Party official. He was arrested and prosecuted.

Interested in engaging students in research and advocacy related to academic freedom?

Learn more about Student Advocacy Seminars and Legal Clinics on our website, and read more about the work done by previous seminars here.

Listen now! SAR’s “Free to Think” podcast

In SAR’s “Free to Think” podcast, SAR Executive Director Rob Quinn speaks with guests who inspire us with their courage to seek and speak truth — often at great risk — as well as those who work to defend them.

As we introduce Season 3 of “Free to Think,” we consider the shockwaves from Mahsa Amini’s death in Iran, prompting protests led by women and girls demanding freedom from state-directed violence. We hear the story of City of Asylum in Pittsburgh, USA which has built a vibrant community welcoming writers-in-exile from across the world. And as academic freedom restrictions tighten worldwide, we explore the role of “academic activism” with SHAPE-SEA’S Joel Mark Barredo.

Tune in now to our latest episodes, available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and all major platforms. And be part of the conversation: share your ideas for topics or speakers for future episodes by writing us at: scholarsatrisk@nyu.edu
Lèse-majesté and academic freedom in Thailand

There’s no question that the monarchy is an important institution in much of Thai society, but it cannot be beyond responsible scholarly inquiry, critique, or commentary — this is what makes the lèse-majesté law so troubling and in need of reform. - Daniel Munier, SAR Senior Advocacy Officer

Last month, SAR Senior Advocacy Officer Daniel Munier gave an interview to 112 Watch, a coalition formed to push back against the Thai government's use of a draconian lèse-majesté law (Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Code). Pavin Chachavalpongpun, an associate professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University and a scholar-in-exile himself, interviewed Daniel about threats to academic freedom that local scholars have been suffering since the 2014 military coup.

The interview also relates the situation in Thailand to the region and discusses what universities, government, and civil society can do to support at-risk scholars and promote academic freedom. Read the piece and learn more about 112 Watch »
News and events

SAR Network “drop-in” sessions | February 16th - June 15th, 2023
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Read more & register »

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.
Read more & register »

Afghan Challenge Fund Call for Proposals | Deadline: March 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 »
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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