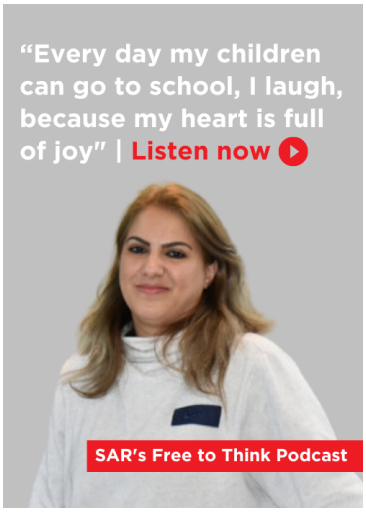
August 2023

A network of solidarity with Afghan colleagues

This August marks two years since the US withdrawal and Taliban takeover of Kabul, Afghanistan. Afghan scholars and colleagues across the education spectrum have witnessed the deliberate and ongoing devastation of Afghanistan's higher education system, and the summary denial of educational opportunity for women and girls. In response to the ongoing and still overwhelming needs, SAR has since worked with more than 100 at-risk scholars and practitioners from Afghanistan, including over 50 who have, to date, taken up positions at 39 host institutions across 9 countries. Many other Afghan scholars have worked with SAR partners and assistance programs worldwide, contributing in myriad ways to the global academy and to their colleagues and students at home. Universities and partners within the SAR network continue to open up opportunities for colleagues in Afghanistan or displaced across the wider diaspora.

Highlights in this month's newsletter include a July SAR workshop for scholars from Afghanistan, as well as profiles of Afghan scholars urgently seeking placements with host institutions. As usual, we invite expressions of interest, and thank the SAR Network for its unwavering solidarity and support.

Listen to stories about Afghanistan on SAR's Free to Think Podcast.



Resources for scholars and practitioners from Afghanistan
SAR maintains a roster of resources and open opportunities for colleagues from Afghanistan and invites updates and information on new resources to share with our network.
Read more»

Afghan scholars discuss career-building in the US

On July 17-18, 17 US-based scholars from Afghanistan joined SAR staff and partners at New York University (NYU) for the first in-person scholar workshop since 2019. The goal of the two-day event was to bring scholars, staff, and partners together to connect and collectively discuss ways to navigate the US job market and explore next steps in building an academic or professional career in a new location. In between sessions from SAR staff on making the most of and planning beyond an academic placement, external partners led thoughtful conversations on the intricacies of finding meaningful and stable employment in the US.

Colleagues from Upwardly Global began with a high-level overview of the US job market and provided guidance on US workplace culture, networking, and utilizing LinkedIn. A panel of representatives from academia followed with detailed explanations of the PhD and academic job application process, and opened up a thoughtful discussion on the different pathways to a career in academia. An NYU-based career coach closed with an interactive session on telling one's story in a job application and tailoring a CV and resume to highlight strengths and diverse experience.

A common thread throughout the workshop was the importance of growing community, both academically and personally. Scholars engaged not only with the various presenters, but also with one another, forging meaningful connections to fellow Afghan academics and growing a network of peers. Following the workshop, the scholars reported a stronger understanding of the US job market, the PhD application process, tailoring job materials, and networking.

One scholar shared, **"***It was a productive workshop and I learned a lot. I am very grateful that you invited me to this event. I enjoyed and learned. After one year I met Afghan scholars, it was exciting and I am happy that they are safe and appreciate your assistance with each one of us."*

Scholars at Risk (SAR) announces a call for applications for five remote research fellowships for early career researchers who investigate academic freedom issues and/or related higher education values. The fellowship program, made possible by the generous support of and partnership with the Mellon Foundation, is intended to provide support for a professional community of researchers who wish to develop and share related work leading to the completion of a formal written publication, a new course offering, workshop, webinar or other significant end product.

Over the course of the 8-month program from November 2023 to June 2024, fellows will complete their proposed project and participate in monthly remote workshop sessions to present their work and offer peer feedback. During the latter part of the program, they will prepare and deliver an online talk or presentation of their work for SAR staff, network members, and/or guests (with appropriate security accommodations, as necessary). Fellows will receive a stipend of ~USD $8,000 intended to cover research expenses, publication, or other costs and will have the opportunity to gain exposure to SAR's programming and network with SAR partner-experts on academic freedom issues. Learn about the 2022-2023 cohort of Mellon/SAR Academic Freedom Fellows here.

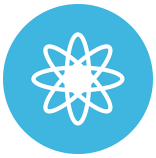
Read more and apply »

Afghan 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.

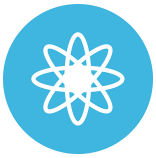
A Journalist and Scholar of Economics

This scholar holds an MA in economics and has one year of recent university teaching experience in Afghanistan and several years of professional experience as a journalist covering human rights, women's rights, and minority rights topics. She reports heightened risk in relation to her gender and her articles on human and women's rights topics. She looks to conduct research on the history of the women's rights movement in Afghanistan and is seeking a research position in Switzerland beginning in September 2023. This candidate is eligible for co-funding through SAR's Practitioners at Risk program. (Afghanistan-2072)



A Scholar of Agriculture and Entomology

This scholar has nearly two decades of teaching and research experience and has served in leadership roles within his university's faculty of agriculture, most recently as head of the Plant Protection Department. He has published his research in numerous university and peer-reviewed journals, including recent articles on the effect of acaricides on false spider mites. He reports risk due to his collaborations with international institutions. He is seeking a position in a safe location beginning immediately. (Afghanistan-1333)



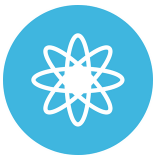
A Scholar of Biochemistry

This early-career scholar has several years of university teaching and research experience in Afghanistan, where she taught courses on biochemistry and molecular biology and served as the head of the department of medicine. She is currently in a visiting scholar position at a university in Sweden, working in a laboratory of plant

physiology. She reports risk in Afghanistan due to her gender and minority ethnicity, and is seeking a follow-up position in Europe beginning December 2023. (Afghanistan-838)

A Scholar of Education and Psychology

This scholar of education and psychology has a decade of teaching and research experience at universities in Afghanistan, most recently as the head of a psychology department. She also has experience working as a counselor for students. She holds a master's degree in education and is currently writing her PhD thesis on educational guidance and counseling. This scholar faces risk due to her women's rights activism in Afghanistan. She is seeking a position in a safe location beginning immediately. (Afghanistan-1783)



A Scholar of Engineering

This scholar of civil and environmental engineering specializes in drought modeling, water basins, and environmental issues in Afghanistan. In addition to several years of lecturing in universities, she has worked extensively with the Afghan government on national infrastructure projects. She reports risk of violence due to her work on US funded projects and her high-profile position as a female academic and ranking governmental employee. She is seeking teaching or research opportunities in the United States beginning immediately. (Afghanistan 1093)

SEE ALL SCHOLARS >

Patrick Zaki is free and has returned to Italy

On July 23rd, researcher and recent University of Bologna graduate Patrick George Zaki returned to Italy after more than 3 years in Egypt, including 22 months of pre-trial detention on charges of “spreading false news.” Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the President of Egypt, pardoned Zaki**,** one day after the Second Division Mansoura Emergency State Security Misdemeanor Court sentenced him to three years in prison.

SAR is grateful to the many SAR sections, members, Student Advocacy Seminars, legal clinic students, and partners who campaigned for Zaki’s acquittal and release over the years.

SAR Italy organized petitions, held events, wrote letters, and advocated for Zaki through the Student Advocacy Seminar program. “SAR Italy and the higher education community members, as well as the many students who took part in student advocacy seminars and advocated for Patrick Zaki, are delighted about his release,” the section said.

SAR welcomes the pardon that led to Zaki’s release and we remain deeply concerned for the many members of the higher education community still wrongfully imprisoned in Egypt. SAR honored detained scholars and students in Egypt with the 2016 Courage to Think Defender Award and, distressingly, many of the concerns raised those years ago are still relevant today.

Student Spotlight:

Emma Hartley, an undergraduate at UC Santa Barbara, is one of many US Student Advocacy Seminar students who have advocated on behalf of Zaki. She shares:

"*I was elated to hear the news of Patrick Zaki's pardon, although frustrated and disheartened by his sentencing. I can't wait to see and continue to be inspired by the work he does for human rights and his community. Advocating on his behalf was an honor, privilege, and eye-opening experience that I will carry with me forever. I will be bringing what I have learned from this experience into my future advocacy efforts and work."* | **Listen to Hartley on SAR's Free to Think Podcast »**

UN side event pushes for practical guidance on implementing the right to academic freedom

On July 11th, SAR led a UN Human Rights Council (HRC) side event on academic freedom, as part of the HRC's 53rd Session at the UN Palais de Nations in Geneva. The event was co-sponsored by the UN Missions for Uruguay, France, the European Union, and Portugal.

Jesse Levine, Senior Advocacy Officer at Scholars at Risk, moderates the side event.

Titled *From words to action: Implementing Academic Freedom under UN Human Rights Standards*, the event intended to emphasize recent progress, while generating authoritative guidance – from states, UN actors, and other stakeholders – on practical implementation of the right to academic freedom.

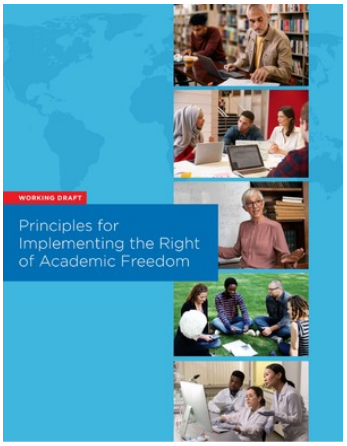
The side event follows a number of significant recent developments in the fight for greater

protection of academic freedom, including most recently the Joint Statement on Academic Freedom led by France and South Africa, and signed on to by more than 70 countries during the March HRC Session.

Participants also focused heavily on the draft Principles for Implementing the Right to Academic Freedom, prepared over the course of the past year by the international Working Group on Academic Freedom, co-led by SAR.

SAR is now in the process of following up with the organizing partners and the state and UN officials who attended the event and volunteered to join this effort going forward. We look forward to sharing more as next steps are finalized.

Read more and watch the event recording »



Call for Papers: Carleton Scholars At Risk Summit

Carleton University

The Scholars at Risk initiative at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada – in cooperation with the Scholars at Risk Network, SAR Canada, the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund, the Middle East Studies Association Global Academy, and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation – is excited to organize the "*Scholars At Risk Summit: Freedom to Think*" this **November 20-21, 2023**, in downtown Ottawa.

The summit will provide a forum for understanding global threats to academic freedom, documenting the consequences of these threats, proposing credible pathways to defend intellectual independence and university autonomy, and providing support for scholars forced to flee their homelands. Scholars from a variety of disciplines, as well as other

contributors from universities, governments, NGOs, and the wider community, are encouraged to join.

Proposals for academic papers and panels that address these and related issues should be submitted using this Submission Portal by **September 1, 2023**. Paper abstracts should be no more than 250 words. Panel proposals should include the names of participants and a theme, and may also include discussion of individual presentations within the panel.

Read more »

CAFA Seeks Regional Director & Host Institution

The Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas (CAFA), of which SAR is a lead partner, has issued a call-for-applications (in English and Spanish) for two roles: (1) a Regional Director that will lead the growth and development of CAFA's membership, activities, and sustainability efforts and (2) a Host Institution that will employ the Regional Director and support the coalition's operations.

The Regional Director role is an exciting opportunity for a highly organized, strategic, and entrepreneurial professional interested in working with CAFA to advance its mission and its leadership in the defense of academic freedom in the region. The Host Institution role is an important opportunity for an interested higher education institution or civil society organization in Latin America that seeks to demonstrate their commitment to academic freedom. We invite you to share this call-for-applications as widely as possible. Interested candidates should submit their application materials by September 15, 2023.

Meet the MSCA4Ukraine awardees

In this short video, 10 MSCA4Ukraine awardees, who are researchers across various disciplines, speak about the impact of the war in Ukraine on their work and life. This is the second video of a series that will be released in the course of 2023, introducing 10 of the 124 MSCA4Ukraine awardees who are conducting their fellowships with various academic host institutions in 21 EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries. The first video is available to watch on SAR Europe website and YouTube channel.

Welcome to Alisen!

We are delighted to welcome Alisen Stasiowski to Scholars at Risk! As a Program Assistant for the Advocacy team, Alisen conducts research for the Academic Freedom Monitoring Project to document attacks on higher education around the world, and research and advocacy in support of SAR's Scholars in Prison Project. Prior to joining SAR, Alisen first interned and then worked as a Research Consultant at the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), where her work focused on documenting attacks on education, primarily in Ukraine, and contributed to the drafting of several reports and briefs.

She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine where she was a TEFL Volunteer focusing on gender-based inclusion community trainings. Alisen holds a M.A. in international affairs with a concentration in human rights policy from Columbia University and a B.A. in political science & law from California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo.

Support SAR today

Support human rights and stand in solidarity with at-risk scholars around the world. Your contribution helps promote their indispensable scholarship and allows us to advocate on their behalf, preserving everyone's right to think, question, and share ideas. **Give today »**

SELECT OPPORTUNITIES & RESOURCES

See a full list of scholar resources on SAR's website

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE

Call for applications: PhD positions, University of Trieste, Trieste, Italy | Deadline: August 21, 2023

The University of Trieste, announces a selection for the awarding of additional doctoral positions within the academic year 2023/2024.
Read more »

SCUOLA NORMALE SUPERIORE

Call for applications: 15 PhD positions in political science and sociology, Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence, Italy | Deadline: August 24, 2023

The PhD courses in "Political Science and Sociology" and "Transnational Governance" of the Scuola Normale Superiore are taught in English, with a grant duration of 4 years. Scholarships are available for applicants from any country and for any PhD programme offered within the Faculty. We actively encourage applications from all parts of the world.
Read more »

Call for applications: Human Rights Advocates Program (HRAP), Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR), Columbia University | Deadline: October 15, 2023

Founded in 1989, HRAP leverages the resources of Columbia University and those offered by NYC as a hub of NGOs and international organizations to provide human rights advocates with academic, skill-building, mentoring, and networking opportunities. Through seminars, participation in University courses, and workshops led by staff from leading human rights organizations as well as meetings with policymakers and funders, advocates share their experiences, reflect critically on their work, and plan future campaigns.

Read more »

EVENTS

SAR Partner Event: Certificate in Advancing the Role of Community Stakeholders in Refugee Integration, Guilford College, Greensboro, N.C. USA | Aug 11, 2023

This certificate will engage participants in learning about forced displacement and refugee resettlement, and the methods by which community members can support and participate in refugee integration efforts while centering the agency and dignity of refugees as co-designers of those methods. The program will involve a three-day in-person learning from Aug. 11-13 on Guilford's campus, and an online element from October 20-22.

Read more »

2nd Regional Conference on Academic Freedom in the Americas, Brazil | November 9-10, 2023

Join us November 9-10 online and in Curitiba, Brazil, for the Second Regional Conference on Academic Freedom in the Americas, organized by the Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas (CAFA) and hosted by Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná-PUCPR.
Read more »

MEDIA

NED Partner Stands Up for Scholars and Academic Freedom | Sarah Hutson, National Endowment for Democracy, 7/24

Scholars, journalists, lawyers, and artists ask big questions as part of their work. But in many countries, asking those questions can also put them in danger. Marvi Sirmed, a Pakistani journalist and former Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellow at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), was charged with blasphemy and received death threats based on comments she made on Twitter. **Read more »**

Academic freedom "increasingly under threat" | Viggo Stacey, The PIE News, 7/26

New guidance on academic freedom took centre stage at a recent event hosted by the UN Human Rights Council and Scholars at Risk, as stakeholders warned that it is increasingly under threat worldwide. **Read more »**

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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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