Scholars at Risk Network: Activities & Opportunities

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Scholars at Risk is a global movement to protect everyone’s freedom to think, question, and share ideas.

**THE NETWORK**

Over 470 institutions in 35 countries, including ‘sections’ in Canada, Ireland, Netherlands & Belgium (with UAF), Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom (with CARA), Germany, and Finland.
**Activities**

As SAR members, university leadership, staff, faculty, and students have the opportunity to actively engage in:

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<th>Protection</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Learning</th>
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<td>• hosting threatened scholars for temporary academic visits</td>
<td>• offering Student Advocacy Seminars to teach real-world advocacy skills</td>
<td>• attending SAR conferences and workshops</td>
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<td>• referring scholars to the network for assistance</td>
<td>• supporting scholars in prison by writing letters of appeal</td>
<td>• inviting SAR scholars to share their stories on campus</td>
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<td>• work with the SAR Academic Freedom Monitoring Project</td>
<td>• joining research groups looking at pressing issues facing international higher education</td>
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PROTECTION

SAR nominates candidates for temporary placements at institutions across the global network.
In 2016, SAR received a record number of applications for assistance – 560 – and arranged placements for 108 scholars from a wide variety of disciplines.

- Social Sciences: 40%
- Arts & Humanities: 20%
- Physical & Life Sciences: 15%
- Law & Human Rights: 9%
- Medicine & Public Health: 6%
- Mathematics & Info. Science: 5%
- Journalism & Writing: 3%
- Business & Finance: 2%
**SCHOLAR COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN**

SAR currently provides assistance to scholars from over 25 countries.
EXAMPLE

SAR-assisted scholar

Dr. Anna Dolidze

International Law

Home country: Georgia

Risks: Intimidation, surveillance, and arrest in retaliation for her open criticism of policies relating to the operation and independence of the Georgian judiciary

SAR Network positions: NYU Law School, USA and Western University, Canada

Where is she now? In 2015, Dr. Dolidze returned to Georgia to begin an appointment as Deputy Defense Minister. In June 2016, she was appointed the chief legal adviser to the President of Georgia.
SAR-assisted scholar

Dr. Kassem AlSayed Mahmoud
Food Science

Home country: Syria

Risks: Targeted by the government for defecting from compulsory military service

SAR Network position: Ghent University, Belgium, arranged with the UAF-SAR Netherlands & Belgium Section

Where is he now? Dr. AlSayed is working as a postdoctoral researcher in Belgium and dreaming of returning to his homeland.
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RECENT CASES

**Scholar of Political Science from Azerbaijan**
This political scientist has teaching experience teaching in Azerbaijan and Germany, and research experience throughout Europe. This scholar reports risk of arrest and harassment due to the content of his work in Azerbaijan.

**Scholar of Agriculture and Molecular Biology from Syria**
This junior researcher in plant molecular biology has published articles on wheat and grain genetics. This scholar reports facing threats to his life and risk of arrest due to the ongoing conflict in Syria and his failure to accept compulsory military service.

**Scholar of Physics from Egypt**
This physicist specializes in high energy and quantum physics, with several dozen academic articles published and papers given at conferences in the US and Europe. This scholar reports facing threats to his life due to the content of his academic work.

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SAR’s advocacy programs call attention to attacks on higher education communities and the need to promote academic freedom.

- **Action Alerts & Campaigns**
- **Student Advocacy Seminars**
- **Academic Freedom Monitoring Project**
- **Publications**

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Turkey: Detained higher education professionals at risk of torture

August 2, 2016 -- Scholars at Risk (SAR) is gravely concerned about sweeping actions against Turkey’s higher education sector, including most recently prolonged incommunicado detention and related risks of torture and ill-treatment of hundreds of higher education professionals, in violation of Turkey’s obligations under domestic and international law.

These detentions and concerns of torture, coupled with reports of forced resignations imposed by Turkey’s Council of Higher Education (YÖK) on more than fifteen hundred faculty deans, suspensions of thousands of education ministry personnel, university closures, widespread travel restrictions and orders that academics abroad return to Turkey, suggest a broad campaign against intellectuals and intellectual expression, in violation of Turkey’s international and domestic legal obligations to protect institutional
Student Advocacy Seminars offer faculty the chance to help students develop research and advocacy skills by investigating attacks on higher education communities and conducting advocacy on behalf of scholars and students facing unjust restrictions, prosecution or imprisonment.

With SAR’s assistance, faculty arrange and supervise a small-group seminar, independent study, or internship workshop for students through which they research and conduct advocacy on behalf of imprisoned scholars and countries facing widespread threats to academic freedom. Students gain experience in human rights research, standards and mechanisms; persuasive writing (including case dossiers, letters and appeal campaigns); leadership; and advocacy organizing. Students work to raise awareness of cases or incidents including, as appropriate, undertaking informational outreach to local, national and intergovernmental authorities, and others capable of intervening positively. Faculty supervise the students, handle all local academic requirements and coordinate with SAR staff, who provide background information and advice.

“The work that I have done in the student advocacy programs over the last few years has created a symbiosis of sorts—I have made extremely useful connections in high places, and in doing so have made progress in getting imprisoned scholars released.”

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LEARNING

SAR convenes faculty, students and professionals to join a growing conversation around human rights and university values.

- Speaker Series
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Research Groups

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LEARNING: Global Congress

SAR’s biennial global network congress convenes faculty, students and professionals in a conversation around higher education security and values.

Montreal 2016
Congress report

Berlin 2018
Save the date: April 23-26, 2018
LEARNING: Promoting Higher Ed Values

SAR convenes faculty, students and professionals to join working groups on issues of higher education security and values. One such project is on promoting higher education values:

- SAR-coordinated working group & related workshops
- Values discussion guide & toolkit (including background on ‘values’ project, goals, case studies, suggested language for MOUs, other proposed vehicles for inclusion of values in international partnerships etc.)
- MOOC (2018-19 via Erasmus+ grant)
- Inviting case examples, participation, event co-organizers
LEARNING: Protecting Student Expression

SAR convenes faculty, students and professionals to join working groups on issues of higher education security and values. Another such project is on protecting responsible organized student expression:

- SAR-coordinated working group & related workshops
- Values discussion guide & toolkit (including background on project, goals, case studies, and a suggested language for a “compact” on responsible organized student expression)
- Inviting case examples, participation from student representatives and event co-organizers
POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR RESEARCH ALUMNI

- Subscribe to receive SAR emails to learn about opportunities
- Encourage their institution to join SAR
- Invite a speaker to campus or organize a speakers’ tour
- Host a threatened or refugee scholar
- Join SAR’s Academic Freedom Monitoring project as a researcher
- Advocate on behalf of a scholar in prison
- Organize a SAR Student Advocacy Seminar
- Build a national SAR section or join national section where they already exist
- Host or participate in SAR workshops/trainings
- Join us for the 2018 SAR Global Congress in Berlin (April 23-26, 2018)