



2018

Free to Think

Report of the Scholars at Risk
Academic Freedom Monitoring Project

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Cover: A student attends a protest at Iran's University of Tehran. Protests over economic conditions and policies, largely led by students, gripped the country from late December 2017 to early January 2018. State authorities have arrested and prosecuted at least 150 students in connection with the protests.

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SCHOLARS AT RISK
N E T W O R K

 protection  advocacy  learning

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Around the world, attacks on scholars, students, staff, and their institutions occur with alarming frequency. These attacks are carried out by both state and non-state actors, in open and closed societies, using a range of methods. Ultimately, these attacks not only harm the individuals and institutions directly targeted; they undermine entire higher education systems and shrink everyone's space to think, question, and share ideas freely and safely.







Through its Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, Scholars at Risk (SAR) responds to these attacks by identifying and tracking key incidents, with the aim of protecting vulnerable individuals, raising awareness, encouraging accountability, and promoting dialogue and understanding that can help prevent future threats. *Free to Think 2018*, the fourth in a series of annual reports analyzing attacks on higher education communities around the world,¹ analyzes 294 reported attacks in 47 countries that occurred between September 1, 2017, and August 31, 2018.²

The Monitoring Project collects data on defined types of attacks on higher education. These include: killings, violence, and disappearances; wrongful prosecution and imprisonment; loss of position and expulsion from study; improper travel restrictions; and other severe or systemic issues (including, for example, university closures or military occupation of campuses). While they differ across states and regions and by severity and type, these attacks all share a common motivation: to control or silence higher education institutions and personnel. This report focuses on key developments and trends over the reporting year.

As in past years, armed groups and individuals continue to carry out severe, violent attacks on higher education communities. These include attacks in countries experiencing extremism or conflict, where higher education communities may be targeted as perceived symbols of state authority or sources of opposition to radical ideologies. These also include targeted attacks against individual scholars or students that are intended to retaliate against or deter inquiry and expression. Over the past year, SAR reported both violent attacks on campuses in Afghanistan, Kenya, Nigeria, and Pakistan, and targeted attacks on individual scholars in India, Pakistan, Turkey, and Yemen.

REPORTED ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER 1, 2017 – AUGUST 31, 2018

	Killings, Violence, Disappearances	79
	Imprisonment	88
	Prosecution	60
	Loss of Position	22
	Travel Restrictions	15
	Other	30

Total **294**

State authorities use detentions, prosecutions, and other coercive legal measures to retaliate against and deter academic activity, expression, or association. In Iran, students and scholars have come under increasing risk of imprisonment, prosecution, and custodial abuse. And in China, authorities have detained a growing number of scholars and students from the Uyghur minority community in so-called “re-education camps” and other facilities.

¹ For past editions of *Free to Think*, see <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/bytype/free-to-think/>.

² Given limited resources, as well as the scope, variety, and complexity of attacks, a comprehensive accounting of all attacks during this period is not yet possible.

SAR has reported at least 875 students killed, arrested, or subjected to other coercive force in connection with their expressive activity. These attacks are part of a long-standing global problem of attacks on peaceful student expression. Such attacks often trigger, and seek justification in, incidents in which some students engage in violent acts, including clashes with opposing student groups and authorities or the destruction of university property. Violent and coercive attacks on student expression threaten the future of strong, nonviolent student movements.

Turkish authorities have continued their campaign of sweeping and targeted actions against the country's higher education sector, aimed at silencing and removing individuals from academia who have endorsed a petition critical of state military actions or who have been accused of association with groups disfavored by the government. These actions include imprisonments, prosecutions, dismissals, expulsions, and travel restrictions against thousands of scholars, administrators, staff, and students.

Authorities in at least nine countries have used travel restrictions, including restrictions on entry, exit, and residence, to obstruct academic inquiry and expression. These include reports of travel restrictions by state authorities in Russia, Cameroon, and Hong Kong that targeted individual scholars. These also include broad travel restrictions on academic communities in Turkey, where thousands of academic personnel dismissed and banned from public service remain subject to a travel ban; in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, where foreign academics face opaque rules that threaten their ability to conduct work at universities there; in Tajikistan, whose government tightened restrictions on academic travel outside the country; and in the United States, where academics and students from Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, and Yemen are barred from entry as a result of an executive order banning entry of all travelers from those countries.

Also in the United States, provocative off-campus groups and individuals have chosen colleges and universities as the sites of controversial speeches and rallies that frequently result in confrontations. In several cases, these confrontations became violent, endangering students, faculty, and others. Political actors seeking to expose alleged bias among scholars and students have taken a variety of public measures, including the creation of online watchlists, surreptitious audio and video recording, and advancing restrictive and potentially overbroad legislation, all of which have prompted concerns about a shrinking campus space for free, open inquiry and debate.

Governments around the world target universities and other academic institutions through legislative, administrative, and political attacks on their autonomy and operations. These include both new and ongoing cases in Hungary and Russia, where authorities have threatened to close academic institutions and restrict academic disciplines.

The incidents covered by this report are only a small portion of all incidents involving attacks on higher education over the previous year. Nevertheless, they are sufficient evidence of a global crisis of attacks on scholars, students, and other members of the higher education community requiring a robust, global response. Scholars at Risk calls on states, higher education leaders, and civil society around the world to respond to this crisis: to **reject violence and coercion** aimed at restricting inquiry and expression; to **protect threatened students, scholars, and universities**; and to **reaffirm publicly their support for the principles** that critical discourse is not disloyalty, that ideas are not crimes, and that everyone should be free to think, question, and share ideas.

“a global crisis of attacks [...] requiring a robust, global response.”

VIOLENT ATTACKS ON HIGHER EDUCATION COMMUNITIES

Violent attacks on scholars, students, and higher education communities remain a grave concern. These incidents not only harm their immediate victims but also damage the university space more generally, by sending a message that certain ideas are off limits, and anyone who expresses them risks physical harm.

During the past year, SAR reported 79 violent attacks against higher education communities in 27 countries. At least 77 students, scholars, staff, campus security personnel, and others died in these attacks, with hundreds more injured.



Killings, Violence, and Disappearances

During this reporting period, SAR issued 79 reports of killings, violence, and disappearances. These incidents include killings and disappearances either in retaliation for particular academic content or conduct, or targeting of members of higher education communities, including higher education leaders, academic and nonacademic staff, and higher education students. Disappearance includes arrest, detention, abduction, or other deprivation of liberty by government or quasi-government officials, by groups, or by individuals acting on behalf of, with support, consent or acquiescence of the government, followed by a refusal to disclose the fate or whereabouts of the persons concerned, or a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of their liberty, which places such persons outside the protection of the law. Violence includes violent physical assaults causing serious harm to individual members of higher education communities, including beatings, shootings, or other injuries with weapons, and torture.

Attacks on Campuses

Significant attacks on universities occurred in Kenya, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Afghanistan.

In Kenya, on October 10, 2017, a group of gunmen ambushed a van carrying students, staff, and faculty from off-campus housing to the campus of the Technical University of Mombasa (TUM) (AFMI 529). As many as ten gunmen had reportedly been hiding on the side of the road, apparently waiting for the vehicle. Two TUM lecturers were killed in the attack, while the driver and two police officers were injured. Authorities suspect Al Shabaab militants, with their history of violent activity in the area, of carrying out the attack.

In Pakistan, on December 1, 2017, three men wearing burqas and suicide vests entered the campus of the Agricultural Training Institute in Peshawar, where they fired on security personnel, killing one guard and injuring another (AFMI 546). They then made their way to a dormitory, where they shot at students from outside the building. Police arrived at the scene, setting off a firefight that lasted several hours. All told, 12 people, including 6 students, were killed in the attack, while another 37 were injured. The militant group known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan claimed responsibility for the attack.

In Nigeria, the University of Maiduguri has endured a series of violent attacks dating back to January 2017. On February 19, 2018, a group of soldiers monitoring the university's perimeter noticed an individual who appeared to be a suicide attacker near the campus walls (AFMI 590). They fired on the attacker, detonating the individual's suicide vest. Only the attacker was injured. On April 8, 2018, a group of attackers wearing suicide vests attempted another attack on the university (AFMI 630). This time, one of the attackers was shot, detonating his vest, while another was killed after



A rescue worker gestures toward bullet holes in the wall of a computer lab after an armed attack on the Agricultural Training Institute in Peshawar, Pakistan, on December 1, 2017 (AFMI 546).

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being pursued by an air force helicopter. Boko Haram, an extremist organization whose name translates as “Western education is forbidden,” was suspected but did not claim responsibility for either attack. (It had taken responsibility for at least one earlier attack.) These were the seventh and eighth attacks on the University of Maiduguri in the past two years.³ Following earlier attacks in 2017, university officials took measures to increase security, including digging a trench around the campus. These appear to have significantly limited the damage from the recent attacks.

In Afghanistan, more than 2,000 Islamic scholars, members of a group known as the Ulema Council, had convened in early June 2018 on the campus of the Polytechnic University of Kabul. They met during Ramadan to discuss the Afghan war and attacks by the Taliban and the Islamic State. On the morning of June 4, the group of scholars issued a fatwa, or religious edict, stating that the insurgency by those extremist groups had no religious basis

and that suicide bombings were forbidden by Islam. Shortly thereafter, a bomber detonated an explosive device outside the tent where the council had met, killing 14 of its members and injuring at least 20 (AFMI 663). On August 15, 2018, another bomber detonated an explosive device at the Mowud Education Center (MEC) in Kabul’s Dasht-i-Barchi district (AFMI 713). As many as 500 students in their teens and twenties were studying for university entrance exams at MEC at the time of the attack, which left 34 dead and at least 57 injured. On August 16, the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack. The education center is largely attended by Kabul’s minority Shiite Hazara community. Reports suggest that the attack is part of a pattern of violence against the Hazara community.

Targeted Attacks

Individual scholars and students in several countries have also been the targets of violent,

³ See *Free to Think 2017*, pp. 7-8.

often sectarian attacks. SAR reported targeted attacks that left nine dead and at least three injured.

In Pakistan, on January 22, 2018, Sareer Ahmad, principal of the New Islamia Public College (NIPC), in Shabqadar, was killed by second-year student Faheem Shah during a confrontation over the student's absence from classes (AFMI 576). Mr. Shah was absent while attending a series of protests led by members of Tehreek-e-Labaik, a national religious party. The protesters charged that the wording of a 2017 election bill was blasphemous. After Mr. Shah returned to NIPC on January 22, Principal Ahmad confronted him about his absence. Mr. Shah accused Principal Ahmad of blasphemy (for not supporting his protest of the allegedly blasphemous bill) and shot him multiple times, killing him. The student was subsequently arrested and taken into police custody.

In Bangladesh, on March 3, Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, a professor of computer science and engineering, a fiction writer, and a vocal critic of sectarian politics and radicalism, was attacked during an event at Shahjalal University of Science and Technology, where he teaches (AFMI 599). The attacker approached Professor Iqbal from behind and stabbed him in the head at least three times, before he was stopped by others at the event and later arrested. Professor Iqbal survived the attack. Authorities claim that the attacker is tied to an extremist internet forum that has accused Professor Iqbal of being an atheist and, therefore, an appropriate target for attack.

In Turkey, on April 5, Osmangazi University research assistant Volkan Bayar shot and killed four university administrators on campus (AFMI 628). Mr. Bayar was arrested on the scene. The attack occurred against the backdrop of sustained national pressures on higher education personnel—and in particular on personnel thought to be followers of the exiled Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen. Mr. Bayar accused without evidence more than one hundred academics at Osmangazi

University and around Turkey of being followers of Mr. Gülen. Multiple university staff members complained to law enforcement, alleging that Bayar was mentally unstable and a threat. Authorities declined to take action against him, claiming that Bayar was performing his civic duty by exposing Mr. Gülen's followers. The attack sparked student protests on the Osmangazi campus and outside the offices of Turkey's Higher Education Council (YÖK). Authorities responded to these protests with violent force and detentions.⁴

In Yemen, on May 16, Najat Ali Muqbil, dean of the Health Sciences College at the University of Aden, was attacked in her home (AFMI 650). The attackers entered her home before dawn, carrying automatic weapons. They killed Professor Muqbil, her son, and her granddaughter. Authorities arrested a suspect following the attack. On May 29, it was reported that a court in Brega convicted and sentenced to death the suspect, Abdulkarim Majour, who allegedly confessed to killing Professor Muqbil and her family members because they belonged to a Muslim Shiite sect.

And in India, on August 17, Sanjay Kumar, assistant professor of sociology at Mahatma Gandhi Central University, was attacked at his home in retaliation for recent expressive activity, including social media posts that criticized the late, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (AFMI 715). Soon after he published the posts, at least ten men stormed Professor Kumar's apartment and dragged him to the street where they beat him and doused him with gasoline. Professor Kumar survived the attack but suffered serious injuries.

Lethal Violence against Student Protesters

Violence against university student protesters is a particular concern. While these incidents are discussed in detail later in this report,⁵ it bears mentioning here that eight incidents resulted in deaths of student protesters.

⁴ See p. 25 for details on these and other student protests.

⁵ See pp. 22-24 for more information.

Most prominently, these included widespread attacks against student protesters in Nicaragua. On April 18, 2018, students began demonstrating against government corruption, demanding democratic reforms and rejecting government austerity measures. The protests quickly spread and continued nationwide for more than four months. Police violence against the protesters has been frequent. Clashes between protesters and security forces have resulted in at least 317 people killed and at least 1,830 injured, including many students.⁶

Authorities also killed students in connection with protests in Senegal, Bolivia, and Kenya, as discussed in detail later in this report.⁷

SAR condemns these targeted, violent attacks on higher education communities and calls on state authorities to investigate these incidents, to make every effort to hold perpetrators accountable, and to ensure the security of all members of the community. SAR also calls on higher education institutions and civil society to press state authorities for greater protection and accountability, and to contribute to efforts to understand and reinforce principles of autonomy and academic freedom.

⁶ See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/08/1016682>.

⁷ See pp. 22-24

CASE UPDATES

Disappearance of Student Protesters in Mexico



The case of the disappearance of 43 students from the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers' College in Ayotzinapa, Mexico, in September 2014 remains unresolved. The college students were reportedly kidnapped and forcibly disappeared following a confrontation with municipal police, as they returned to Ayotzinapa from an off-campus protest. Although a government investigation has led to more than one hundred prosecutions, it has reportedly failed to resolve questions of the students' ultimate fate and the identities of the perpetrators. In a March 2018 report titled "Double Injustice: Report on Human Rights Violations in the Investigation of the Ayotzinapa Case," the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights found that there were strong grounds for believing that suspects had been tortured, arbitrarily detained, and subjected to other human rights violations in the course of the investigation of the case. According to the report, these incidents, among other things, have led to a continuing failure to resolve the matter. Parents of the disappeared students continue to call for a full, transparent investigation.

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Giulio Regeni



The murder of Italian PhD student Giulio Regeni remains unresolved. Regeni, a graduate student at Cambridge University, was researching labor issues in Egypt when he disappeared in late January 2016. His body was found outside Cairo roughly a week later, showing signs of torture. Egyptian authorities deny any official involvement in Regeni's murder, although they have acknowledged that he was being monitored. Italian prosecutors have commenced their own investigation of the case, which remains ongoing.

WRONGFUL IMPRISONMENT & PROSECUTION OF SCHOLARS

Scholars and students, through their teaching, fieldwork, public discussions, and other activities, challenge norms, beliefs, and established structures of power. To maintain control, state authorities frequently retaliate against and restrict scholars' and students' academic work and expression, by launching criminal investigations, issuing warrants, and through detentions and other coercive legal measures. These actions are often carried out under laws related to terrorism, national security, and defamation, among others.

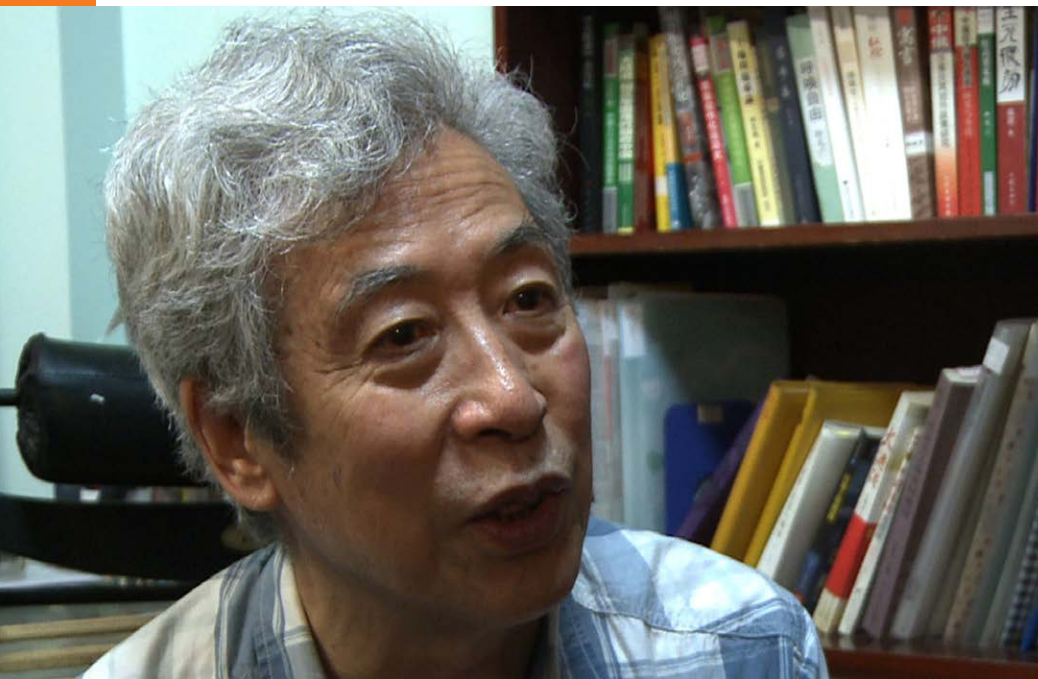
As a result, scholars and students are silenced, subjected to lengthy trials and appalling prison conditions, and ultimately made to suffer irreparable harm to their careers and personal well-being. For the authorities, the real value of these tactics lies in their message to higher education

communities at large: that crossing certain lines can come at a price.

During this period, SAR reported 104 incidents in which scholars and students were imprisoned or prosecuted in connection with their academic or expressive activities. These include a PhD student arrested in Egypt while conducting interviews, as well as scholars detained incommunicado in Saudi Arabia for their women's rights activism.

Academic Content & Conduct

In at least 11 incidents reported this year, authorities detained or took other coercive legal action against scholars in apparent retaliation for their scholarly work or expression.



On August 1, 2018, Chinese police reportedly raided the home of prominent scholar Wenguang Sun during a live telephone interview with Voice of America (AFMI 700). He was detained and held at several different locations until his release on August 12.

© 2013 TANIA LEE/AFP/Getty Images


In Malaysia, on September 25, 2017, federal officials arrested Mustafa Akyol, a Turkish scholar and journalist, who was in the country to give a series of lectures (AFMI 525). Prior to his third lecture, titled "The Islamic Jesus: The Commonalities between Judaism, Christianity and Islam," a group of men approached Mr. Akyol, introduced themselves as "religious enforcement officers," and indicated that he should not speak about religion without authorization from the Federal Territory Islamic Affairs Department (JAWI). Event organizers decided to cancel the lecture in response to the encounter. Later that day, as Mr. Akyol prepared to leave the country, federal authorities

at Kuala Lumpur International Airport took him into custody and eventually transferred him to JAWI headquarters. The next morning, authorities brought Mr. Akyol to a Shariah (Islamic law) court and interrogated him for two hours. Authorities then released Mr. Akyol and allowed him to leave the country.

In Thailand, on October 9, 2017, historian Sulak Sivaraksa was charged with *lèse-majesté*—which prohibits criticism of Thailand’s king, queen, crown prince, or regent—in response to comments he had made at an academic conference on October 5 (AFMI 528). According to prosecutors, Mr. Sulak raised questions about a popular historical narrative concerning a battle fought by the sixteenth-century Thai king Naresuan. Mr. Sulak reportedly told the audience “not to easily believe in things. Otherwise they will fall prey to propaganda.” He also reportedly characterized King Naresuan as being “cruel.” On October 9, Thai police summoned Mr. Sulak and formally charged him. On January 17, 2018, a judge dropped the *lèse-majesté* charge due to a lack of evidence.

In the Gambia, on January 31, 2018, authorities arrested political science professor Ismaila Ceesay on a charge of “incitement to violence,” based on his comments to the media about government policy (AFMI 582). The allegations relate to an interview with *Voice* magazine, in which Professor Ceesay criticized Gambian national security policies, commenting that some military officers “feel rejected by the administration,” which might result in “pockets of mutiny.” Following Professor Ceesay’s arrest, activists held an overnight vigil outside the police station where he was being held. The next morning, authorities released Professor Ceesay and dropped the charge against him.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, on February 7, authorities charged Alphonse Maindo, a professor of political science at the University of Kisangani, with defamation in connection with a grading dispute with one of his students (AFMI 584). In October 2017, Dr. Maindo refused to grant a passing grade to Innocent Kabundi, a military general and one of his students, who allegedly



Wrongful Imprisonment & Prosecution

During this reporting period, SAR reported 60 incidents of wrongful prosecution and 88 incidents of wrongful imprisonment. Wrongful prosecution includes administrative, civil, or criminal proceedings against higher education leaders, academic and nonacademic staff, or higher education students involving false or otherwise wrongful grounds; or charges directly relating to, or in retaliation for, the expression of academic opinions or other professional or student activity; or in retaliation for other exercise of fundamental human rights including free expression and freedom of association. Wrongful imprisonment includes the arrest, interrogation, detention, and/or prosecution of scholars, students, or other members of higher education communities on false or otherwise wrongful grounds or charges, directly relating to, or in retaliation for, the expression of academic opinions, or other professional or student activity, as well as in retaliation against other exercise of fundamental human rights, including free expression and freedom of association.

never attended class. University authorities overrode Dr. Maindo’s decision, granting Mr. Kabundi a passing grade, which Dr. Maindo later challenged in a letter to his department dean. The letter, which was subsequently leaked over social media, prompted Mr. Kabundi to bring a criminal defamation complaint against Dr. Maindo, which remains pending as of this report.

In Turkey, on May 22, state prosecutors launched a criminal investigation against Bülent Şık, a scholar specializing in food and public health, in response to a series of his articles about government research findings (AFMI 654). In the articles, which were published on the website of the newspaper *Cumhuriyet* in April 2018, Dr. Şık alleged that the Turkish Ministry of Health withheld the findings of a study on cancer-causing agents found in several cities exhibiting above-average cancer rates. According to Dr. Şık, who had worked on the research behind the Ministry study, agricultural products and drinking water from these cities

exhibited higher levels of pesticide, heavy metals, and other pollutants. In response to a complaint about the article filed by the Ministry of Health, public prosecutors opened an investigation against Dr. Şık, alleging that he violated Turkish Penal Code Articles 334, 336, and 258, which relate to the handling of so-called “prohibited” information. According to Dr. Şık, public prosecutors are now considering bringing terrorism-related charges against him.

In Egypt, on May 24, authorities detained Walid Salem, a PhD student at the University of Washington in the US. They later charged him with “spreading false news” and “joining a terrorist group” (AFMI 656). The charges are apparently connected to Mr. Salem’s research activities concerning judicial independence in Egypt; he had just concluded an interview with a prominent law professor at the time he was detained. Sources

indicate that authorities had held Mr. Salem incommunicado for four days without access to a lawyer before he was arraigned in court, also without counsel. Mr. Salem remains in prison as of this report.

And in China, on August 1, police detained Wenguang Sun, a prominent scholar and retired professor of economics at Shandong University, during a live telephone interview with Voice of America (AFMI 700). The radio station’s US-based Mandarin service was interviewing Professor Sun, who at the time was home in China, about an open letter he had written regarding China’s foreign policy and spending practices. During the call, police abruptly entered Professor Sun’s home and demanded that he end the interview. In the recording, Professor Sun can be heard refusing the order and protesting the officers’ presence in his home, before the phone line goes dead. Authorities held Professor Sun at several different locations until August 12, when he was returned home under close state surveillance.

Activism & Dissent

Authorities frequently target scholars and students⁸ with imprisonment and prosecution in connection with their views and activism related to important public issues, including human rights, democracy, and politics, often charging them under laws concerning terrorism and national security.

These include hundreds of university personnel in Turkey who have been imprisoned or prosecuted over the past year in apparent connection with their endorsement of the Academics for Peace petition, which criticized state military actions, or their associations with groups disfavored by

⁸ While this section focuses on scholars, see pp. 21-27 for more extensive analysis of students imprisoned and prosecuted for expressive and associative activity.



On May 24, 2018, Egyptian authorities detained Walid Salem, a University of Washington PhD student, and later charged him with “spreading false news” and “joining a terrorist group,” in connection with his research activities (AFMI 656).

Photo courtesy of Mr. Salem's Family

the government.⁹ Similarly, Iranian authorities have detained and prosecuted at least 150 students in connection with nationwide protests that began in December 2017.¹⁰

In Ethiopia, on March 8, 2018, authorities detained without charge Seyoum Teshome, a scholar of management at Ambo University and a blogger, apparently in retaliation for his writings criticizing the state of emergency declared in February 2018 (AFMI 604). About two weeks later, on March 25, authorities detained 6 university professors, along with 13 journalists and other professionals, who had gathered for a meeting to discuss establishing a new political party (AFMI 618). The Ethiopian government has since released thousands of individuals, including scholars and students who had been detained in connection with their activism. Among those released are Professor Teshome and the six professors detained on March 25.

In China, on April 28, police detained Zi Su, a retired professor of political science, in connection with a letter he had published online (AFMI 641). The letter, titled “Proposal for Democratic Direct Elections at the 19th National Congress and Nomination of Mr. Hu Deping as New General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party,” criticized Chinese president Xi Jinping, described his rule as a dictatorship, and called for him to step down. On June 14, authorities formally arrested Zi for “incitement to subvert state power.” This has since been replaced with the more serious charge of “subversion of state power,” which carries a minimum prison sentence of ten years.

In Saudi Arabia, authorities began detaining scholars and activists in May 2018, apparently for



Women’s history scholar and activist Dr. Hatoon Al-Fassi was detained by Saudi authorities in June 2018 amidst a government crackdown on human rights defenders (AFMI 677).

their activism related to women’s rights reforms in the country. Their activism includes efforts to lift a ban on women driving and to end the country’s male guardianship system. Scholars targeted in the crackdown include Dr. Eman Al Nafjan, an assistant professor of linguistics, and Aziza Al-Yousef, a former lecturer in computer science at King Saud University. Both were detained along with at least five others between May 15 and 18 (AFMI 648). The next month, between June 21 and 24, authorities also took into custody prominent women’s history scholar Dr. Hatoon Al-Fassi shortly after she publicly announced plans to celebrate the coming repeal of the driving ban (AFMI 677). SAR understands that the scholars and activists are being held in unknown locations without access to family or legal counsel.

In India, on June 6, police arrested Shoma Sen, an English professor at Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University (RTMNU), along with

⁹ See pp. 28-34 for more information on the imprisonment and prosecutions of academic personnel in Turkey.

¹⁰ See pp. 15-17 for more information.

four activists (AFMI 665). The group of five has been charged under India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act for "spreading controversial pamphlets" and "delivering hate speeches," and under the country's anti-terrorism law for having alleged links to the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist). The charges are apparently based on the defendants' alleged participation in a January 1 memorial event that commemorated a battle that occurred in 1818 between Dalit soldiers of the British army and the upper-caste Peshwas. At the event, members of the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party protested and clashed violently with participants, resulting in at least one person killed. Professor Sen's daughter maintains that her mother had no connection with the Bhima Koregaon event beyond expressing solidarity with the movement. On June 8, RTMNU officials suspended Professor Sen from her position as head of the English department due to her arrest and ongoing prosecution.

And in Bangladesh, on August 5, authorities arrested Shahidul Alam, a visiting professor at Sunderland University, a public intellectual, and an acclaimed photojournalist, in apparent retaliation for his public comments on student protests in Bangladesh (AFMI 703). Alam spoke on Facebook Live and Al Jazeera earlier that day about a protest at which he and a group of journalists were attacked by alleged members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League, a youth organization backed by the ruling government party. In his interview with Al Jazeera, Alam alleged that police hired armed individuals to attack student protesters. Hours after the interview aired, at least thirty police officers raided Alam's home, took him into custody, interrogated him, beat him, and charged him under section 57 of the International Communication and Technology Act (ICT Act) for electronically sharing material that "tends to deprave and corrupt" the public and causes "deterioration in law and order." Alam, who was temporarily hospitalized due to police officers' use of force, remains in jail as of this report.

Since the first *Free to Think* report in 2015, SAR has reported thousands of scholars and students imprisoned, prosecuted, and subjected to other coercive legal force in connection with their peaceful academic conduct and expression. While governments have a legitimate right to protect national security and stability, they also have a responsibility to refrain from using security concerns as a pretext for interfering in the peaceful exercise of academic freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and other related human rights.

Scholars at Risk urges state authorities to release scholars, students, and other members of the higher education sector who have been wrongfully imprisoned or prosecuted in connection with nonviolent expression and, pending their release, to uphold relevant obligations under domestic and international law, including especially those related to due process and the humane treatment of prisoners. SAR further urges state authorities, higher education communities, and society at large to review laws used to prosecute scholars and students and to amend or repeal them as necessary to ensure that scholars and students can peacefully exercise their rights to academic freedom and the freedom to think more generally, without retribution.

TARGETED ATTACKS ON SCHOLARS & STUDENTS IN IRAN

Reports of attacks on higher education in Iran have increased in the past year. These include crackdowns on student protests, prosecutions of scholars on security-related charges, and imprisonment and custodial abuses of scholars and researchers.

Crackdowns on Protests

On December 28, 2017, protests began in Mashhad, Iran's second most populous city, over economic stagnation and lack of opportunity. Within days, the protests spread to other cities throughout the country, including Tehran, and expanded in scope to embrace a more generalized critique of Iran's ruling regime. University campuses—which for several weeks had been the sites of isolated protests over tuition fees and gender discrimination—quickly became major staging grounds for the nationwide protest movement.

At the University of Tehran, throughout a three-day protest that began on December 30, police

detained 15 students (AFMI 563). Students had gathered on campus, chanting anti-government slogans. Police responded with violent force, including using tear gas against the students. Some protesters reportedly threw stones at police in response.

Following these arrests, on January 1, 2018, members of the University Trade Unions' Council of Iran (UTUCI), a student union, met with the University of Tehran's chancellor to negotiate the detained students' release. Following the meeting, four of the UTUCI members were themselves arrested (AFMI 565). As many as 150 students are estimated to have been detained and prosecuted in connection with the nationwide protests, which many of the students claimed they had never attended.¹¹

In the months that followed, several students and professors received long prison sentences in connection with the protests. These include University of Tehran students Sina Rabeiei, Mohsen Haghshenas, and Leila Hosseinzadeh, who were

11 See <https://iranhumanrights.org/2018/07/iran-is-imprisoning-university-students-accused-of-attending-protests/>.



Iranian police block University of Tehran students from participating in protests on December 30, 2017. As many as 150 students are estimated to have been detained and prosecuted in connection with the protests.

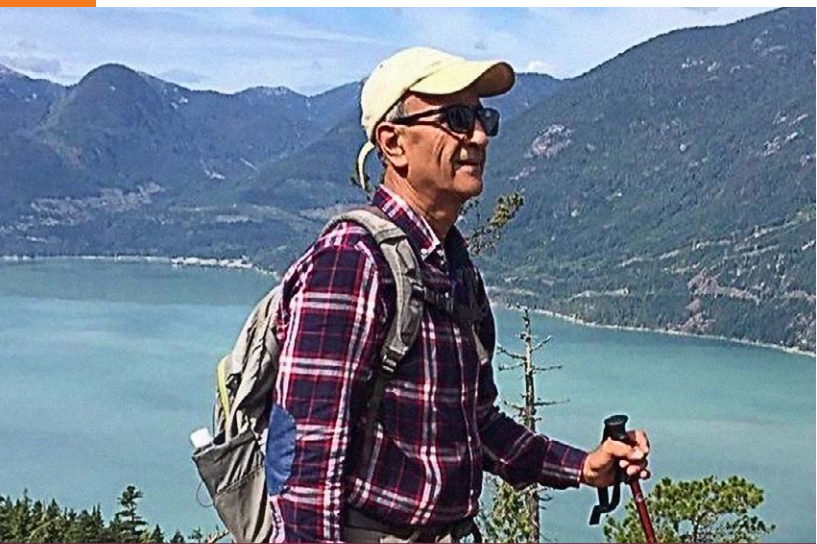
sentenced in early March to one year, two years, and six years in prison, respectively (AFMI 607). Sadegh Zibakalam, a professor of political science at the University of Tehran, was convicted on March 12 for public statements he made during the protests (AFMI 608). He was sentenced to 18 months in prison and banned for two years from giving public speeches, publishing articles, giving interviews, and engaging in social media activity. University of Tehran student activists Sina Darvish Omran and Ali Mozaffari were sentenced on June 11 to eight years in prison and banned from political and social media activities for two years (AFMI 667). Rouhullah Mardani, a former student and a teacher at the University of Tehran, was sentenced on July 4 to six years in prison for his alleged participation in the protests (AFMI 685). And on July 29, Branch 28 of Tehran's Revolutionary Court convicted and sentenced Pedram Pazireh, vice chairman of the University of Tehran's Student Union, to seven years in prison and 74 lashes in connection with the protests (AFMI 566). In all of these cases, the charges related to national security and included "propaganda against the regime," "action against national security," and "spreading false information."

Compounding the imprisonments and prosecutions are reports that authorities have excluded applicants from graduate programs in retaliation for their alleged participation in protests, writings on social media, and other expressive activity.¹² This practice, which has reportedly occurred at various times over the past decade, involves marking students' applications with a star, ostensibly indicating that they allegedly lack required documents. Students seeking to rectify the alleged problems with their applications report being asked to sign pledges promising that they will refrain from protest activities. On December 11, 2017, it was reported that 27 "starred" applicants had been denied admissions to graduate programs (AFMI 552). As of this report, Iran's parliament is considering legislation that would end the practice.¹³

Prosecutions & Long-term Detentions

Over the past year, SAR has reported on scholars in Iran facing national security-related charges, such as espionage or collection of classified materials. These cases also raise grave concerns about due process and ill treatment of the accused. Most have been detained in Evin Prison, where reports of mistreatment and denial of medical care are frequent.

On January 24, 2018, Iranian authorities arrested on espionage charges Dr. Kavous Seyed-Emami, a professor of sociology at Imam Sadiq University and a co-founder of the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation; at least seven other environmentalists were arrested along with him (AFMI 578). On February 9, authorities notified his wife that he had died in custody at Evin Prison. The following day, they announced his arrest and death in custody, claiming it was a suicide. His colleagues and family deny this claim. Professor Seyed-Emami, a dual Canadian-Iranian national, was an environmentalist who led camping trips for Iranian youth. During those trips he placed cameras in the wilderness to



Sociologist Dr. Kavous Seyed-Emami was arrested on espionage charges in January 2018 (AFMI 578). On February 9, Iranian authorities reported that he died in prison, claiming that he had committed suicide. Authorities have not disclosed evidence supporting the espionage charges or the suicide claim.

Photo courtesy of Mr. Seyed-Emami's family

¹² See <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/09/05/irans-student-activists-denied-education>.

¹³ See <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=2018091818331121>.

track rare animals. Authorities alleged that he and his colleagues were “collecting classified information about the country’s strategic areas under the guise of carrying out scientific and environmental projects.” The authorities have yet to publicly disclose any evidence supporting the charges or the claim of suicide. In March 2018, state authorities barred Dr. Seyed-Emami’s wife Maryam Mombeini from exiting the country with her sons, reportedly due to the ongoing prosecutions against the detained environmentalists. As of this report, Ms. Mombeini remains in Iran.

On April 15, Professor Abbas Edalat, a British-Iranian professor of computer science and mathematics at the Imperial College London, was arrested on espionage charges (*AFMI* 637). Professor Edalat is an anti-war activist who maintains a home in Tehran and has been a regular commentator on Iranian state media. In April 2018, while Professor Edalat was in Iran attending an academic workshop, Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps soldiers raided his Tehran home, confiscated his belongings, and arrested him. Professor Edalat’s family reportedly posted bail for him, but he refused it, arguing that he was innocent and should be cleared of the charges against him outright.

These actions by the Iranian authorities appear to be driven by the false view that students, professors, and the scholarship they produce represent a threat to national security. This perception constitutes a direct threat to Iran’s rich intellectual tradition. SAR urges Iranian leaders to reverse this worrisome trend, to release scholars and students who have been detained for acts of expression or academic inquiry, and to ensure protection of fundamental rights including academic freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and due process.

ONGOING DETENTION CASES



The case of **Ahmadreza Djalali**, an Iranian-Swedish dual citizen and a scholar of disaster medicine, raises major concerns. Originally arrested in April 2016 while attending academic conferences in Iran, Dr. Djalali was reportedly forced to sign a false confession to national security-related crimes the following February. On October 21, 2017, he was sentenced to death. His counsel was denied an opportunity to appeal the conviction. His sentence was affirmed on December 9, 2017. He remains detained in Evin Prison. As of August 2018, Dr. Djalali was reportedly suffering from significant health problems and had been denied essential medical care.



Similarly grave concerns persist about **Xiyue Wang**, a Princeton University graduate student in Eurasian history who was arrested in August 2016. Mr. Wang was charged with crimes relating to “infiltration” after conducting research in Iran’s national archives, a process that is approved and strictly overseen by Iranian authorities. His research included scanning documents from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Authorities have alleged that Mr. Wang was conveying information discovered in his research to foreign entities, including the US State Department. Authorities, however, have not disclosed any evidence supporting this claim and have not indicated what documents in Mr. Wang’s research were classified. Mr. Wang was convicted in July 2017, and sentenced to ten years in prison. His sentence was upheld on appeal the following month. Mr. Wang remains detained in Evin Prison, where he has been subjected to torture and other ill-treatment and suffers from significant health problems.



Hamid Babaei, a doctoral student in finance at the University of Liège in Belgium, is likewise being held in Evin Prison. On August 13, 2013, Mr. Babaei was arrested while on a trip to Iran with his wife. After he reportedly refused a request to spy on his fellow Iranian students in Belgium, he was charged with the crime of “acting against national security by communicating with a hostile government.” He is now serving a six-year prison sentence.

DETENTION OF UYGHUR SCHOLARS & STUDENTS IN CHINA

SAR reports with grave concern efforts by Chinese authorities to detain scholars and students of the Uyghur community.

The Uyghur are an ethnic religious community, living predominantly in China's northwestern Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The Uyghurs have been subjected to government restrictions under the guise of anti-terrorism and national unity policies, including policies that restrict their use of the Uyghur language and their exercise of the Islamic faith. Scholars and activists who have addressed these restrictions in their academic work and public advocacy have been targeted with imprisonment and prosecution. These include Ilham Tohti, a prominent scholar of economics at China's Minzu University, who is serving a sentence of life in prison.¹⁴

In January 2017, state authorities launched a campaign ordering Uyghur students studying abroad to return to China. The campaign reportedly includes detentions of and threats to detain family members in China of students who refuse to return voluntarily, as well as pressures on foreign governments to detain and repatriate Chinese-Uyghur students studying in their countries.¹⁵

Starting in April 2017, Chinese authorities began taking Uyghurs into custody without charge, transferring them to so-called "re-education camps," often formally referred to as "Professional Education Schools," among other titles. It is suspected that many Uyghurs who have been reported missing are in state custody in such camps. According to one Uyghur rights group, those detained likely include tens of thousands of

Uyghur students and academic personnel.¹⁶ Experts further report that detainees have been denied access to legal counsel or family and are at grave risk of physical and psychological abuse.

As of September 2018, China's central government authorities had not publicly acknowledged the existence of the camps. However, an official Chinese Communist Party Youth League recording from October 2017 titled "What Kind of Place Is the Educational Transformation Center?" acknowledged their existence. It claimed that the camps' purpose is to "[treat] people who are infected with ideological illnesses."¹⁷ Local government officials have also confirmed reports of Uyghurs being sent to camps.¹⁸ Due to the challenges in accessing information on individuals detained in China, SAR's reporting on this situation is limited to a few cases.

In December 2017, Chinese authorities detained prominent Islamic scholar Muhammad Salih Hajim, along with his family, without charge (AFMI 548). They were taken to an unknown location. Hajim is reportedly the first scholar to translate the Quran into the Uyghur language. In January 2018, Uyghur rights groups reported that Hajim died while in custody. One report suggests that his death may have been the result of torture and other ill treatment he allegedly suffered while in custody. Authorities have confirmed his death, but declined to comment on the circumstances or to release his body to his family.

Also in December 2017, Rahile Dawut, an internationally renowned scholar of Uyghur studies at Xinjiang University, went missing after leaving

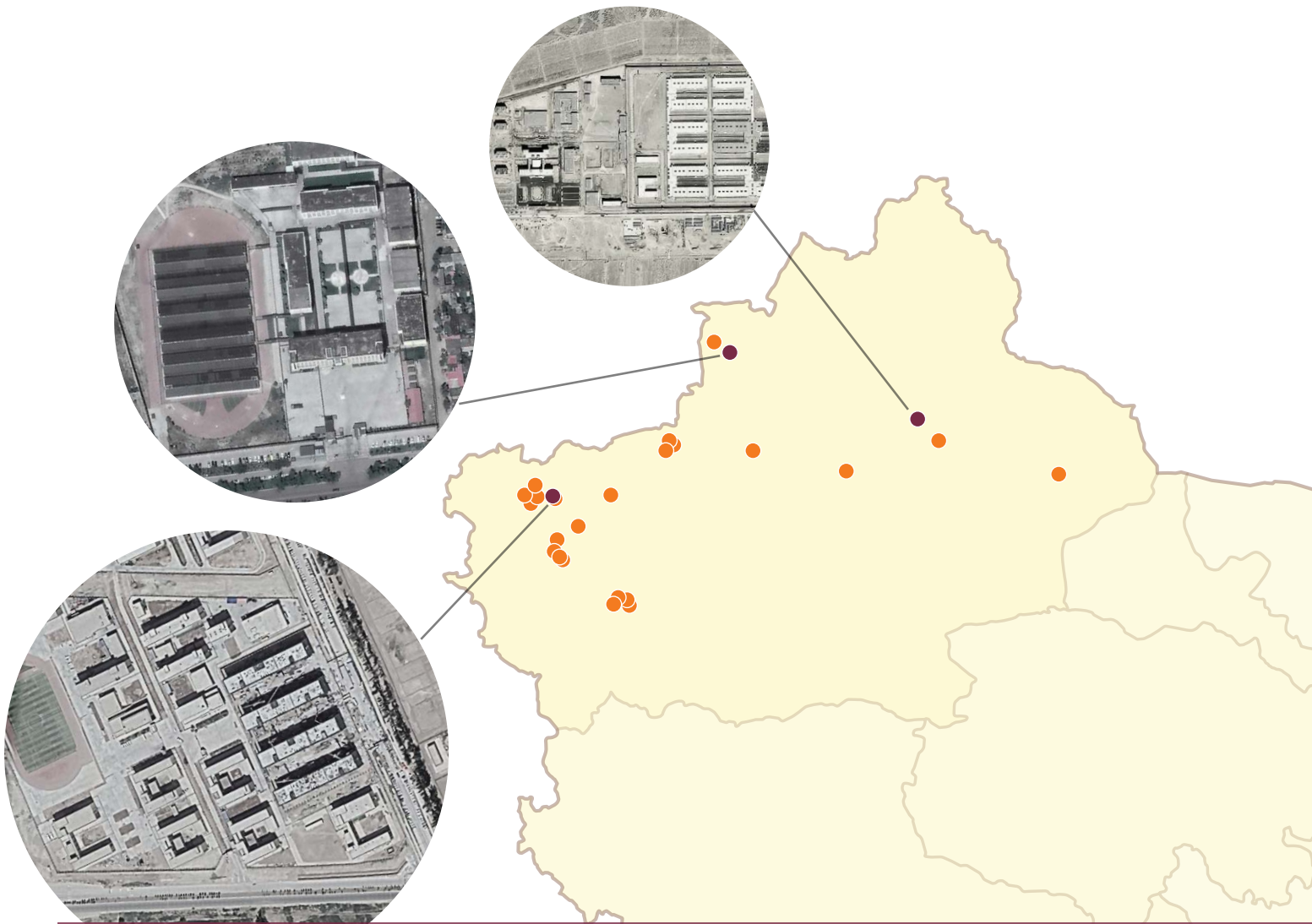
14 See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2014-09-22-central-university-nationalities/>.

15 See *Free to Think 2017*, p. 30.

16 NGOs estimate that as many as one million Uyghurs have been detained. See https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/CHN/INT_CERD_NGO_CHN_31745_E.pdf and https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CERD/Shared%20Documents/CHN/INT_CERD_NGO_CHN_31898_E.docx.

17 See <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/infected-08082018173807.html>.

18 See <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/uyghur/township-08062018145657.html>.



As many as tens of thousands of Uyghur students and scholars are estimated to have been detained at so-called “re-education camps” and other detention facilities in China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR). The above map of the XUAR indicates locations of suspected re-education camps and detention facilities, according to analysis of government documents and satellite imagery by University of British Columbia law student Shawn Zhang. (Data last accessed on August 18, 2018). Learn more about Mr. Zhang’s research at <https://medium.com/@shawnwzhang>.

Urumqi to travel to Beijing (AFMI 547). Professor Dawut’s family and friends, fearing retaliation, waited nearly eight months to make news of her disappearance public. They, along with human rights groups, suspect that state authorities have detained Professor Dawut in a re-education camp or prison. Government officials have not disclosed her location nor any charges brought against her.

On January 29, 2018, Chinese authorities detained Abdulqadir Jalaledin, a well-known literature professor at Xinjiang Pedagogical University (AFMI

581). Police raided Professor Jalaledin’s home, placed a black hood over his head, and took him into custody. As of this report, Professor Jalaledin remains in detention without access to legal counsel or family. Authorities have not disclosed his whereabouts nor have they revealed any evidence or charges related to his detention.

And in May 2018, Guligeina Tashimaimaiti, a PhD student at the University of Technology in Malaysia, was reported missing in the XUAR (AFMI 661). Ms. Tashimaimaiti had previously

been interrogated by state officials during a March 2017 family visit to China. They reportedly demanded she provide them with a DNA sample and a copy of her passport, and also forced her to sign a pledge promising to return to the country after completing her studies in Malaysia. Months after returning to Malaysia, Ms. Tashimaimaiti lost contact with her parents and brother in Xinjiang. Ms. Tashimaimaiti, who was due to begin her PhD program in the coming months, returned to the XUAR to search for them, fearing they had been detained. After several weeks, Ms. Tashimaimaiti's sister and a friend lost contact with her. A neighbor of Ms. Tashimaimaiti's family reportedly suggested that Ms. Tashimaimaiti is being held in a re-education camp. Authorities have not disclosed any information regarding either her location or any charges against her.

Reports of mass detentions and “re-education” in China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region recall the days of the Cultural Revolution, when state authorities detained many of the country's scholars, public intellectuals, and young people, and subjected them to forced labor and physical and psychological abuse. Revival of these tactics today could result in similar consequences: the loss of a generation of scholars and students and a shrinking of the space in which *all* Chinese—not only Uyghurs—enjoy their right to freedom of thought and inquiry.

SAR urges Chinese state authorities to immediately release scholars, students, and other members of the Uyghur ethnic community who have been detained for peacefully exercising their rights to academic freedom, free inquiry, free expression, and association. Pending this, SAR urges authorities to disclose the basis of their detention and their location, and to uphold national and international legal obligations related to due process and treatment of persons in custody. SAR further calls on Chinese authorities to refrain from detentions, re-education efforts, and other actions that restrict

academic freedom and its constituent freedoms of expression, opinion, thought, association, and travel. Finally, states and higher education authorities outside of China are also urged to press Chinese authorities to accelerate these actions and to demonstrate publicly their commitment to academic freedom and human rights.¹⁹

¹⁹ One recent example of higher education professionals acting in support of the Uyghur community is the Xinjiang Initiative. Learn more at <https://xinjianginitiative.wixsite.com/xjinitiative>.

PRESSURES ON STUDENT EXPRESSION

Around the world, university students engage in collective and individual acts of expression on diverse and important issues—from the rising cost of education and government austerity measures, to discrimination and sexual harassment. Students call attention to these and many other pressing issues by petitioning, debating, marching, and participating in countless other forms of expression, on and off campus.

Such expression is a critical aspect of public discourse within democratically legitimate states. It both challenges and reinforces higher education leaders, state officials, and civil society. As such, student expression is protected under existing international human rights and higher education principles, including freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, academic freedom, and the right to education. Too often, however, violence, arrests, or other types of coercive force are used to restrict and retaliate

against student expression in violation of these principles.

During this reporting period, SAR reported at least 81 incidents of attacks on students in connection with their expressive activities and associations. These include violent attacks, targeted killings, arrests, prosecutions, and institutional retaliation. Such attacks harm the students immediately engaged in expressive activity and chill everyone's exercise of the right to free inquiry and expression.

In some cases, attacks on students and tensions on campus have preceded violent or destructive acts by some students. In 13 incidents during this reporting period, subgroups of students engaged in physical violence, including attacks on other students and the destruction of property. Violent acts, either by the authorities or by students, endanger other members of the university community, threaten to escalate conflict, and



Students hold a candlelight vigil for protesters killed during demonstrations in Managua, Nicaragua. Police, paramilitary troops, and pro-government protesters have used violent, often lethal force against the largely student-led protest movement.

© 2018 AP Photo/Alfredo Zuniga

undermine the university's ability to function internally and within the larger society as a space for the exchange of ideas.

These incidents demonstrate an urgent need for state and higher education authorities, students, and civil society to protect and promote peaceful student expression.

Violent Attacks on Student Expression

In at least 41 incidents, state and private security forces used violent force against student expression—a 78 percent increase over last year's reporting. At least eight students have been killed and many more injured as a result of authorities using live ammunition and rubber bullets, water

cannons, batons, and tear gas, among other weapons, to restrict and retaliate against student expression.

In Kenya, during a September 26, 2017 protest at the University of Nairobi, police stormed classrooms and residence halls and began using violent force against students (AFMI 526). Following the police response, third-year architecture student Tom Wanjohi was found beaten unconscious in a classroom; he died six days later. Five months later, on February 27, 2018, police responding to a protest at Meru University of Science and Technology killed Evans Njoroge, a prominent student activist and secretary general of the Students' Council (AFMI 595). The students had been engaged in months of protests over a university fee increase; some protests became violent and led to the university shutting down on February 1. At the February 27 protest, police dispersed students and at least one officer pursued Mr. Njoroge off campus. The officer asked civilians for his whereabouts, located him, and shot him in the head. Reports indicate that the officer then changed into civilian clothes and fled the scene. The officer was eventually arrested but has since been released on bail, pending trial.

In Chile, on March 27, 2018, police deployed water cannons and clashed with students peacefully demonstrating outside the Constitutional Court in Santiago (AFMI 620). The students were protesting a recent court decision that declared as unconstitutional a legal provision that forbids university administrators from profiting from public education. Video evidence showed 25-year-old economics student Fernando Quintana Caldera being beaten by police, dragged away, and knocked unconscious. He was later found to have suffered traumatic brain injury.

In Nicaragua, police and paramilitary groups used deadly force against university students, along with other activists, who led nationwide protests that began on April 18. The students protested austerity measures, demanding democratic reforms, and calling on President Daniel Ortega to resign. Police and other groups responding to the



A Nicaraguan police officer throws a stone at students protesting in front of the University of Engineering in Managua.

© 2018 INTI OCON/AFP/Getty Images

protests frequently fired live ammunition and used water cannons. Some students prepared and used makeshift mortars in response to violent, often lethal force.

On April 23, a group of students at the Polytechnic University of Nicaragua (PUN) organized a vigil for those who had been killed in the five days since the protests had begun. Authorities reportedly attempted to clear the students from PUN, raiding the campus and opening fire, killing one student and injuring others (AFMI 640). As the protests continued, students began setting up camps on campuses across the country.

On May 28, a group of pro-government counter-protesters known as “turbas Sandinistas” clashed violently with students occupying the campus of the National University of Engineering (AFMI 659). Riot police arrived shortly thereafter, joined the turbas Sandinistas, and opened fire on the student protesters, killing 1 and injuring 41.

On June 23, state security forces opened fire on students occupying the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAM), apparently in an effort to deter them from participating in a protest later that day, killing two and injuring more than a dozen others (AFMI 674).

On July 13, security forces again opened fire on students occupying the UNAM campus, forcing more than one hundred students and others to seek shelter in a nearby church (AFMI 691). The security forces followed the students to the church and fired at them overnight, until church officials negotiated a ceasefire early the next morning. Two students were killed, and dozens more were injured.

Since the protests began in Nicaragua, at least 317 people have been killed, and more than 1,830 injured; many of the fatalities were students.²⁰

In Senegal, on May 15, a police officer opened fire during clashes with student protesters at University Gaston Berger (UGB), killing one student (AFMI

“These incidents demonstrate an urgent need [...] to protect and promote peaceful student expression.”

649). The students had occupied administrative offices on the UGB campus in mid-May, as part of a protest against the university’s alleged failure to disburse student grants. The protesters planned “days without tickets,” during which they would eat in campus dining halls but would refuse to pay using dining tickets. Police officers arrived on campus on May 15, one day after an order by UGB’s rector to “secure” university restaurants. During the clashes with students, one officer fired his gun, striking second-year student Mouhamadou Fallou Sène. Mr. Sène was transported to a hospital and later died.

In Bolivia, riot police were deployed to the scene of a May 24 student protest over university funding at the University of El Alto in La Paz (AFMI 655). The police clashed violently with protesters, and one student, Jonathan Quispe, was shot and killed, sparking further protests. Authorities initially claimed that he was killed by a fellow protester, but police eventually acknowledged responsibility for the killing, and took the officer who shot Mr. Quispe into custody.

Non-state groups and individuals, including university personnel, have also carried out violent attacks on students engaged in peaceful expressive activity.

In the United States, on February 2, 2018, a group of masked individuals threatened and clashed with students protesting outside an event at Colorado State University (AFMI 583). Groups of students demonstrated their support for and opposition to the event’s speaker, conservative activist Charlie

²⁰ See <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/08/1016682>.

Kirk, when the group of armed, masked individuals arrived on the scene, made Nazi salutes and threats, and clashed with the students.

In Iran, members of the volunteer Basij Militia attacked students demonstrating at Amir Kabir University on March 11 (AFMI 606). The students were holding signs and leading chants against the prosecution and arrest of other student activists when members of the militia arrived and began beating the students with clubs.

In France, on March 22, a group of masked individuals stormed and attacked students occupying an amphitheater at the University of Montpellier (AFMI 614). The attackers used wooden batons to beat the students, who were protesting national higher education reform, and forced them outside of the amphitheater. Three students were injured in the attack. State authorities arrested university personnel, including a law school dean and a professor, for facilitating the attack.

And in India, on August 13, an unidentified individual attacked Umar Khalid, a prominent student activist and a PhD candidate at Jawaharlal Nehru University (AFMI 709). The attack occurred outside the Constitution Club in New Delhi as Mr. Khalid was making his way to an event on hate crimes in India. A man approached him, pushed him to the ground, and attempted to fire a gun at him. Mr Khalid and others on the scene were able to push off the attacker, who then fired his gun into the air and fled. In the months leading up to the attack, Mr. Khalid had reported receiving death threats in connection with his activism.

Imprisonment & Prosecution

Over the past year, state authorities have detained or prosecuted at least 419 students in connection with their expressive activities.²¹

In Pakistan, on October 23, 2017, police arrested at least 70 Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) students

for their participation in an ongoing strike over university fees, facility improvements, corruption, and the expulsion of fellow students (AFMI 534). When students refused to end their strike, QAU officials called police to campus. Once on the scene, police reportedly raided residence halls and used violent force in their efforts to arrest students. The students were released one day later.

In the United States, on November 28, 2017, police briefly detained Joliet Junior College student Ivette Salazar for distributing flyers on campus (AFMI 545). Ms. Salazar was distributing flyers that read “Shut Down Capitalism,” apparently in response to anti-socialism materials being distributed on campus. According to Ms. Salazar, campus police told her that she could not distribute her flyers because of the “political climate of the county” and that she needed to obtain approval from the Office of Student Activities.

In Iran, over the course of a three-day protest that started on December 30, authorities arrested at least 15 students at the University of Tehran (AFMI 563). The protests, which criticized the government over its economic policies, occurred on campuses and in cities across the country and continued into early January 2018.²² As of this report, Iranian authorities have taken into custody and prosecuted up to 150 students for their alleged participation in the protest movement. At least 17 students have been convicted and sentenced.

In Sudan, on January 12, 2018, state security forces detained as many as 117 students during a protest at Aldalang University over the recent killing of classmates by a Sudanese soldier (AFMI 571). Police, armed forces, and National Intelligence and Security Services officers arrived on campus, which had been barricaded by protesting students, and opened fire to disperse the students. According to one report, at least 24 students face criminal charges in connection with the protest, including “joint acts of criminal conspiracy,” “publication of false news,” “disturbance of public peace,” “public

21 Given difficulties in obtaining complete information from sources, the total number of students detained or prosecuted is likely much greater.

22 For more detailed analysis of pressures on Iranian students, see pp. 15-17.

nuisance,” and “criminal mischief.”

In Venezuela, on March 5, Bolivarian National Intelligence Service officers arrested Johan Lobo and Michael Labrador, both student leaders at the University of Los Andes, just minutes after they participated in a television interview (AFMI 601). During the recording, the students demanded that Venezuelan authorities resolve an ongoing public transit strike that had inhibited students’ ability to attend classes. They invited viewers to attend a March 7 rally. Mr. Lobo and Mr. Labrador were released on June 11.

In Tanzania, on March 6, unidentified individuals abducted Abdul Nondo, a student at the University of Dar Es Salaam, in apparent connection with his human rights activism and his role within the Tanzania Students’ Networking Programme (AFMI 602). Mr. Nondo had publicly criticized state authorities in the extrajudicial killing of another student. His captors took him to a secluded location five hundred kilometers away from Dar Es Salaam before releasing him. Days later he was detained by state authorities and indicted for allegedly lying about his abduction to police and friends. Mr. Nondo is released on bail, pending trial.

In Turkey, on March 22, authorities detained five Boğaziçi University students in connection with their participation in a protest condemning Turkish military operations in Syria (AFMI 612). The students had protested on March 19 in front of a pro-military display by student members of Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party. Authorities later arrested another 11 students for participating in the March 19 protest or for publicly supporting the students who were taken into custody on March 22 (AFMI 613, 617, and 621). Nine of the students taken into custody in connection with the protests

were charged with “propagandizing for a terrorist organization.” On June 7, all of the students were released from jail. Those still facing charges are scheduled to appear in court on October 3. On April 12, police used violent force against and briefly detained students participating in protests over the killing of four Osmangazi University (OU) personnel by an OU research assistant (AFMI 635 and 636). The students, who had organized protests on the OU campus as well as outside the offices of Turkey’s Higher Education Council, were demanding safety improvements and the resignation of staff they considered responsible for failing to prevent the attack. On July 7, 2018, authorities began detaining and issuing detention warrants for Middle East Technical University students for their peaceful protest activities at a graduation ceremony (AFMI 687). The students, who were participating in a university tradition of carrying political banners at graduation, held up a cartoon featuring the faces of President Erdoğan and other government officials on various animals. The cartoon was the subject of a civil defamation suit in 2005. At least 12 students were detained or named in detention warrants for their alleged participation in the demonstration.



On March 22, 2018, a group of masked men violently attacked students occupying an amphitheatre at France’s University of Montpellier (AFMI 614). The students were participating in a protest over a national higher education reform.

And in Thailand, on May 28, police summoned Parit Chiwarak, a Thammasat University student activist, and Tanawat Wongchai, vice president of the Chulalongkorn University student union, in response to a peaceful protest they had organized at a local shopping mall (AFMI 660). Authorities summoned the two for questioning shortly after forcing the students to end the protest. Police reportedly decided later not to press charges against them.

University Retaliation against Student Expression

Higher education officials have taken a range of actions against students—including investigations, suspensions, expulsions, and refusals to confer certificates—in retaliation for their peaceful expression.

In Zimbabwe, on September 1, 2017, officials at Great Zimbabwe University (GZW) suspended Kudakwashe Joakim Mugapu in response to a protest he was planning against university fees, an amendment to the Student Representative Council (SRC) constitution, and the auditing of the SRC's books (AFMI 517). GZW's vice chancellor ordered Mr. Mugapu suspended for one year for allegedly “inciting violence” by planning the protest.

On December 16, 2017, administrators at the Hong Kong University of Technology (HKUT) refused to confer degrees on at least 12 students for peacefully protesting at their graduation ceremony (AFMI 554). Sources indicate that two HKUT social work students refused to stand during the playing of the national anthem to protest the Chinese government. University officials promptly ordered the students to leave the ceremony, leading another ten students to follow them out in support. All 12 students were reportedly refused degree certificates as a result of their protest.

In Myanmar, on January 26, 2018, administrations at 5 universities expelled at least 34 students in retaliation for their participation in peaceful campus protests over several days that month (AFMI 579). Following the protests, which

demanded increases in education funding, among other issues, university officials began issuing expulsion notices to the 34 student protesters, alleging that they had violated disciplinary rules.

And in China, on April 22, Peking University officials reportedly barred from campus Yue Xin, a student in the School of Foreign Languages, in retaliation for her inquiry into a case of alleged rape and sexual harassment on campus (AFMI 639). Against the backdrop of a growing presence in China of the global #MeToo movement against sexual harassment, Ms. Yue submitted a petition to the university demanding official records related to allegations of sexual misconduct by a former professor, whose actions allegedly led to a student's suicide. According to Ms. Yue, in response to her public inquiry, university officials summoned her and threatened to bar her from graduating. On another occasion, Ms. Yue's academic advisor, accompanied by her mother, stormed into her dormitory while she was sleeping and forced her to delete documents from her computer related to the information request. She was taken home by her mother and barred from campus for two days.

Student Violence

While the perpetrators of violence in the majority of incidents have been state and university actors, in at least fifteen incidents subgroups of students have engaged in acts that threatened or resulted in harm to persons or property.

In the United States, on September 1, 2017, a student journalist was assaulted during a protest on the campus of the University of Texas, Austin, over pending immigration legislation (AFMI 516). The victim was interviewing a counter-protester when he was struck on the head by another student protester. At the University of Washington, on February 10, 2018, violent clashes broke out between opposing groups of students during a so-called “Freedom Rally” organized by a local campus chapter of the College Republicans, a national student political organization; five individuals were arrested as a result (AFMI 586).

At South Africa's Cape Peninsula University of Technology, a makeshift explosive device was thrown into a university laboratory during a September 11, 2017 student protest over labor issues and the detention of student protesters (AFMI 521). The violent act, apparently intended to disrupt exams, immediately sparked clashes between campus security and student protesters, with the former launching stun grenades and firing rubber bullets. Similar acts of violence during student protests were reported at other South African universities, including the University of Zululand, where students set fire to a building and other university property (AFMI 597), and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which was the site of multiple violent protests in August 2018 (AFMI 710, 714, and 721).

In Ukraine, on October 26, 2017, a right-wing student group known as Tradition and Order threatened violence against members of a club organized by a feminist initiative at the National Pedagogical Dragomanov University (AFMI 536). The club, which sought to convene students to discuss issues related to gender on campus, had begun its first meeting when alleged members of Tradition and Order confronted the club members and threatened to use force if the club did not shut down; police reportedly intervened in this instance to defend the club. During a December 22 club meeting, Tradition and Order students returned, made similar threats, and used tear gas against the club members, leaving at least one student with chemical burns (AFMI 557). As of this report, the university reportedly has not taken any disciplinary action against the Tradition and Order students involved in the two incidents.

In India, on May 3, 2018, student activists from two conservative Hindu student groups clashed violently with students at Aligarh Muslim University over a portrait of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, that had been displayed in AMU's student union (AFMI 645).

And in Bangladesh, a series of violent clashes broke out between students supporting opposing positions on the country's quota system for civil

service employment (AFMI 678, 680, and 681). The protests began in April 2018 and were frequently the site of violent clashes between students supporting quota reforms and members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL)—a national student organization—which opposed the reforms. In several instances, BCL members wielding sticks, iron rods, and other weapons attended quota reform protests and attacked students.

SAR condemns the use of violent and coercive force against students peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly. SAR urges governments and leaders of higher education institutions to ensure that all security personnel, including government and private forces, exercise restraint and respond to protest activities in a proportional and appropriate manner, consistent with recognized international human rights standards. State authorities must further recognize and ensure appropriate protections for nonviolent student expression—in particular when such expression occurs on a campus or in an academic setting. SAR also calls on higher education leaders and administrators to refrain from taking disciplinary actions against students in retaliation for or to restrict nonviolent student expression, inquiry, or assembly.

SAR calls on students and academic activists everywhere to reaffirm the principle of social responsibility, including the key component of nonviolence at its core. Members of higher education communities and society at large should commit to respecting the campus as a safe, free space, where ideas can be expressed and debated without fear of physical harm or undue restriction.

“...commit to respecting the campus as a safe, free space, where ideas can be expressed and debated without fear of physical harm or undue restriction.”

ONGOING THREATS TO TURKEY'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

For the third consecutive year, SAR has reported a high volume of attacks by Turkish authorities against the country's higher education communities, directly impacting more than 880 university scholars, students, and staff.

Imprisonments, prosecutions, dismissals, expulsions, and travel restrictions continue to be used to silence scholars and students who have endorsed a call for peace (the "Peace Petition")²³ or who have been accused of association with groups disfavored by the government. They have also been used to punish and restrict student expression and academic activity generally.

And while the government has lifted a two-year state of emergency, it has announced reforms that seek to restrict institutional autonomy, academic freedom, and everyone's freedom to think, share ideas, and ask difficult questions.

Imprisonments & Prosecutions

During this period, SAR reported imprisonments, prosecutions, and criminal investigations targeting hundreds of university scholars, students, and staff across Turkey.

In the majority of these cases, the scholars and students have been accused, often based on unclear or undisclosed evidence, of affiliations with a movement led by the Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen. Turkish authorities claim that Mr. Gülen and members of his movement coordinated a violent coup attempt on July 15, 2016, that left over 240 people killed and nearly 2,200 injured. However, as of this report, Turkish authorities have not publicly disclosed evidence of a connection between Mr. Gülen or his movement and the coup attempt.

In at least nine cases since September 2017, SAR has reported Turkish authorities citing the suspects' alleged use of ByLock as evidence of affiliations with Mr. Gülen's movement. ByLock is an encrypted smartphone messaging application, which Turkish officials claim was used by members of Mr. Gülen's movement to communicate and coordinate the coup attempt. On December 27, 2017, Turkish authorities issued detention warrants for 171 former personnel of Fatih University, ultimately detaining at least 54, based on their alleged use of the application (AFMI 559). The next day, detention warrants were issued for 23 personnel from Hacettepe University, also based on alleged use of the application; at least 7 personnel were detained (AFMI 561). Despite the authorities' continued reliance on the use of ByLock as evidence in imprisonment and prosecution cases, forensic studies have cast doubt on the ability of investigators to identify individual users or decrypt messages exchanged with the application.

Authorities have also accused academics and students of connections to the coup attempt based on their affiliations with private institutions, including universities, schools, and banks, among others. On October 19, 2017, a Turkish court sentenced Mehmet Ünlü, a former professor of medicine at Afyon Kocatepe University, to 12 years in prison, based on his alleged attendance at Gülen-related religious gatherings, involvement in personnel hirings at the university, and possession of an account at Bank Asya, a national banking institution founded by Gülen's followers and closed by state authorities shortly after the July 2016 coup attempt (AFMI 532). On March 21, 2018, a Turkish court convicted and sentenced to prison 17 former academic and administrative personnel from Melikşah University on terrorism-related

²³ On January 10, 2016, a group of academics known as Academics for Peace published a petition titled "We will not be a party to this crime," which strongly condemns the government's anti-terror policies in the southeastern part of the country and urges the authorities to resume peace negotiations. At the time of the petition's original release, 1,128 academics from Turkey had endorsed it.

charges (AFMI 610). Melikşah University was closed by the Turkish government on July 23, 2016, based on alleged connections to the Gülen movement.²⁴ And on June 2, police raided student dormitories in the city of Adana and detained 25 students, based on allegations that the residences were supported by members of the Gülen movement (AFMI 662).

As a result of the mass dismissals, prosecutions, detentions, and cancellations and confiscations of passports, some university personnel and other former state employees continue to resort to attempts to clandestinely cross the border into Greece in search of safety. Police have detained university personnel and other state employees attempting to make this journey. On December 31, 2017, two former Yildiz Technical University

academic personnel, along with a teacher, were detained as they were preparing to cross the border into Greece (AFMI 564). On July 31, 2018, police detained a former medical professor from İnönü University and his wife in Edirne province, near the Turkey-Greece border (AFMI 699).

Several prominent scholars detained and prosecuted in connection with the coup attempt have been either released pending trial or acquitted during this reporting period.

On December 1, 2017, literature professor Nuriye Gülmen and primary school teacher Semih Özakça were convicted of “being member[s] of a terrorist organization.” The court acquitted Mr. Özakça and ruled to release Professor Gülmen from custody

24 See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-07-23-various-institutions/>.



Academics and activists protest outside a court in Istanbul, on December 5, 2017, where scholars were on trial for their endorsement of the Academics for Peace “Peace Petition” in January 2016.

© 2017 AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis

pending an appeal.²⁵ Professor Gülmen and Mr. Özakça were arrested on May 22, 2017, during a hunger strike they led in protest of a State of Emergency decree that ordered their dismissal alongside more than six thousand other civil servants. The two ended their hunger strike on January 26, 2018—324 days after it began.²⁶

On January 31, 2018, Turkey's 27th Heavy Penal Court acquitted sociologist and human rights activist İřtar Gözaydın of "being a member of

a terrorist organization." In December 2016, authorities issued warrants for Professor Gözaydın and 32 other personnel from the now-closed Gediz University.²⁷ Authorities prosecuted Professor Gözaydın based on her academic work and her appearance on a television station allegedly connected to the Gülen movement. Following her arrest, Professor Gözaydın led a hunger strike until March 30, 2017, when authorities released her and placed her under a travel ban.

25 See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-05-22-sel%C3%A7uk-%C3%BCniversitesi/>.

26 See <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-educators-nuriye-gulmen-and-semih-ozakca-end-hunger-strikes-after-324-days-126346>.

27 See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-12-20-gediz-university/>.



Courage to Think Award

On April 25, 2018, Scholars at Risk presented Academics for Peace (Barış İçin Akademisyenler) with its 2018 Courage to Think Award, for "their extraordinary efforts in building academic solidarity and in promoting the principles of academic freedom, freedom of inquiry, and the peaceful exchange of ideas."

The award recognizes the group's "efforts to build solidarity among scholars inside and outside of Turkey, share vital information, and organize material support for colleagues who have lost their positions, their livelihoods and, in some cases, their liberty, in retaliation for peaceful, expressive activity. The nomination is a specific recognition of Academics for Peace's solidarity work, and at the same time a general recognition of the current pressures on all scholars, students and higher education institutions in and from Turkey."

The award, presented at the Scholars at Risk Network 2018 Global Congress, was accepted on behalf of the group by two of its members, both of whom face charges for their signature to the Peace Petition.

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Despite a few positive developments, many scholars and students remain in pre-trial detention, some since July 2016. Several factors appear to have contributed to their prolonged detentions. Members of Turkey's judiciary are among the many thousands dismissed or detained, resulting in a lack of capacity to meet an overwhelming case volume. Judges and lawyers may also be hesitant to proceed with cases in such a contentious environment, resulting in long adjournments. Hearing delays may also be a result of haste in issuing warrants and making arrests prior to undertaking investigations and collecting evidence.

Authorities have pushed forward in other coup-related cases. On December 20, 2017, Ali Kaya, a theoretical physicist at Boğaziçi University was convicted and sentenced to six years in prison on a charge of "being a member of terrorist organization;" however, he was released early due to the time already spent in detention since his arrest in October 2016 and a pending appeal.²⁸ According to Professor Kaya, his academic travels to the United States and Canada were cited in his indictment.

On February 8, 2018, a Turkish court convicted and sentenced Serkan Gölge, a US-Turkish citizen and a NASA scientist, to seven and a half years in prison on a charge of "membership in a terrorist organization," apparently based on his studies at Gülen-affiliated educational institutions in Turkey and a US one-dollar bill allegedly found during a search of his family's home. Dollar bills have frequently been cited as evidence of membership in Gülen's movement. On September 19, 2018, a Turkish court reduced the charge of "membership in a terrorist organization" to "aiding a terrorist organization." The court reduced Dr. Gölge's sentence to five years in prison. Dr. Gölge plans to file another appeal.

And on February 16, a Turkish court convicted and sentenced economist and columnist Mehmet Altan to life in prison on a charge of "attempting to overthrow the constitutional order." Professor

Altan and his brother Ahmet Altan, a prominent journalist, were detained in September 2016, based on accusations of communicating "subliminal messages" during a television show the night before the coup attempt.²⁹ A regional court ordered Professor Altan's conditional release in June 2018. However, on October 2, Istanbul's 2nd Appeal Court upheld the conviction and sentencing of the Altan brothers, the television show's host Nazlı Ilıcak, and three others.

Since December 2017, court proceedings have commenced against more than 390 academics who had signed the 2016 Peace Petition. Authorities have brought a nearly uniform bill of indictment against the academics, charging them under Article 7/2 of Turkey's Anti-Terror Act, for "making propaganda for a terrorist organization." As of this report, courts have convicted and sentenced 23 academic personnel to 15 months imprisonment.

While most sentences have been deferred or suspended, two academics have had their sentences upheld. On April 4, 2018, a Turkish court upheld the 15-month sentence issued to Galatasaray University professor Zübeyde Füsün Üstel, on the grounds that she "failed to express remorse."³⁰ And on June 5, Istanbul's Çağlayan courthouse upheld its 15-month sentencing of Büşra Ersanlı, professor emeritus of political science at Marmara University (AFMI 664). Professor Ersanlı, who was prosecuted in 2011 on terrorism-related charges for her political activities, disputed this latest charge against her, arguing that her endorsement of the petition was nothing more than the peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression. As of this report, professors Üstel and Ersanlı are released while appeal proceedings are ongoing.

One of the earliest prosecution cases related to the Peace Petition remains ongoing, as of publication. On December 26, 2017, Professors Esra Mungan, Kıvanç Ersoy, Muzaffer Kaya, and Meral Camcı, who were arrested in March 2016 for organizing a press conference supporting the Peace Petition,

28 See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-10-01-bogazici-university/>.

29 See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-09-10-istanbul-university/>.

30 See <https://stockholmcf.org/turkish-court-sentences-2-prominent-academics-over-peace-petition/>.



Loss of position

During this reporting period, SAR reported 22 incidents of loss of position. Loss of position includes discharge, demotion, loss of promotion, or other professional penalty for a scholar's academic work, including statements made in the classroom, writings, research, professional association/union activity, engagement with (and criticism of) higher education leadership or education policy, etc. Relevant incidents involving students include dismissal or expulsion from studies based on academic work or student activities, including statements made in the classroom, writings, research, student association/union activity, engagement with (and criticism of) higher education leadership or education policy, etc.

attended their sixth hearing. After months of deliberation, Turkey's minister of justice approved a public prosecutor's request to change the charges against the scholars from "making terrorist propaganda" to "insulting the Turkish nation" (Penal Code Article 301), which carries a sentence of up to two years imprisonment. They are scheduled to return to court on October 9, 2018.

SAR has reported additional detentions and prosecutions of scholars and students in retaliation for academic and extramural expression. These include a criminal investigation against former Akdeniz University academic Bülent Şık in response to a series of articles he published that were critical of a state-led scientific study (AFMI 654);³¹ the detention of Fikret Başkaya, an academic at Özgür University and a renowned author, in connection with a November 2016 article he wrote titled "The Real Terror is State Terrorism" (AFMI 543); and a series of detentions and arrests in connection with student protest activity at Boğaziçi University, Osmangazi University, and Middle East Technical University.³²

³¹ See pp. 11-12.

³² See p. 25.

³³ For more coverage of education efforts led by dismissed academics, see <https://www.ifex.org/turkey/2018/08/01/purged-academics/>.

Dismissals & Expulsions

After establishing a State of Emergency on July 20, 2016, President Erdoğan's government began issuing emergency decrees, including three in this reporting period, that have had devastating impacts on the higher education sector. These include orders to close 15 higher education institutions, dismiss 7,508 university personnel, and expel 301 students, based on alleged connections to terrorist organizations.

As with other civil servants dismissed by decree, university personnel are subject to a lifetime ban from public employment and the indefinite cancellation of their passports. Due to the stigma surrounding the terrorism allegations, dismissals by decrees have effectively blacklisted those targeted from all comparable employment opportunities outside the public sector. A growing number of targeted academics have led creative efforts to continue their scholarly activities and engage with the public, including through so-called solidarity academies, online educational exchanges, and informal teach-ins.³³ However, the majority struggle to obtain employment with even meager wages. Dismissed academics in contact with Scholars at Risk have framed their lack of academic employment prospects, coupled with widespread travel restrictions, as a "civil death." Scholars report depression and personal and professional isolation.

During this reporting period, the Turkish government issued three emergency decrees ordering the dismissal of higher education personnel. The decrees, issued on December 24, 2017 (AFMI 558), January 12, 2018 (AFMI 572), and July 8, 2018 (AFMI 689), ordered the dismissal of 364 academic personnel and 121 administrative personnel in total. As in the case of wrongful imprisonment and prosecution, the evidentiary bases behind the dismissal orders remain undisclosed or unclear. SAR understands that academics dismissed from their positions include

at least 407 signatories to the Peace Petition (since September 2016),³⁴ and that other expressive activity may have served as the basis for inclusion of certain academics ordered for dismissal.

Decrees issued this year have targeted for expulsion seven students studying abroad. The decrees further provide that any degrees or certifications the students obtain abroad would not be recognized in Turkey.

Reinstatements

Since 2016, 139 academic personnel, 7 administrative personnel, and 27 students previously ordered for dismissal or expulsion—a fraction of the total targeted—have had their employment or student status reinstated by decree. On January 23, 2017, the government ordered the establishment of the State of Emergency Appeals Commission, to allow victims of wrongful terminations and other errors to seek redress. Applicants were given a deadline of September 5, 2018, to submit applications to the Commission. The Commission has reportedly reviewed only 30,000 of the 118,660 applications it has received since opening in July 2017. Of the applications reviewed, only 1,900 have resulted in outcomes favoring applicants; it is unclear how many of these include higher education personnel.³⁵ According to state of emergency decree No. 694, however, Turkey's Higher Education Council (YÖK) will not assign reinstated academic personnel to universities where they were employed at the time of their dismissal. YÖK will assign these personnel to new universities, giving priority to universities outside Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, and universities established since 2006.³⁶

Presidential Authority over Higher Education Institutions

This year, Turkey's government established reforms

that have eroded university autonomy. On July 9, 2018, just hours before being sworn in for his current term, President Erdoğan issued decree No. 703, enacting far-reaching reforms to all areas of government in an apparent effort to consolidate his power. These notably included the complete removal of YÖK from the rector appointment process, making Turkey's president the sole authority in rector appointments.³⁷ The decree further eliminated a requirement that university rectors previously hold the title of professor for five years. The next week, however, the government reversed course on this provision by requiring rector nominees to have held the position of professor for at least three years. Decree No. 703 also limited the percentage of foreign academic personnel in Turkey to two percent.

State of Emergency 2.0

On July 19, 2018, President Erdoğan ordered the lifting of Turkey's State of Emergency. The following week, the government passed counter-terrorism legislation that appears to reflect elements of the State of Emergency, including provisions that extend detentions without charge and permit dismissals of higher education personnel and other civil servants and the cancellation of their passports by decree. For many in Turkey, the lifting of the State of Emergency has not meant a return to stability and security, but a more permanent reality that challenging norms and asking difficult questions can result in irreparable harm.

For the third consecutive year, Turkey's higher education community has suffered from a state campaign of debilitating attacks on the freedom to think, question, and share ideas.

The direct impact of these attacks is beginning to show—tens of thousands of academic personnel

34 See <https://barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/728>.

35 See <https://www.turkishminute.com/2018/08/17/ohal-commission-rejects-28100-applications-from-khk-victims-so-far/>.

36 See Article 198 at <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2017/08/20170825-13.pdf>.

37 Last year, SAR reported that an emergency decree ordered a procedural amendment to state university rector appointments, whereby university faculty would no longer nominate candidates, giving YÖK the authority to nominate three of its own candidates for the Turkish president's consideration.

and students have been forced out of Turkey's universities or put in jail. Academic departments have been short-staffed and, as a result, have been forced to suspend research and teaching activities and even, in some cases, close down. In their 2017 report, Freedom for Academia found an average 11.5 percent decrease in research outputs, across disciplines, by scholars in Turkey; based on production trends since 2008, this translates into 7,000 fewer academic papers in 2017.³⁸ These findings suggest a threat to Turkey's standing in the global higher education arena. They also demonstrate the Turkish authorities' willingness to deprive the public of the benefits of scholarly research in order to punish and eradicate critical thought and discourse.

For the future of Turkey's higher education community, Turkish authorities must swiftly take significant steps toward remedying previous individual and sector-wide actions, including by fulfilling all constitutional and international human rights obligations related to academic freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and due process; releasing all wrongfully detained individuals; and reversing convictions of those who have been wrongfully convicted. Leaders of higher education institutions, including YÖK, and other members of civil society should press state authorities to accelerate the aforementioned actions; to suspend any investigations, prosecutions, detentions, or other pending disciplinary measures; and to ensure due process for all victims under prosecution or in appeals proceedings. Finally, international, state, and higher education authorities are also urged to press Turkish state and higher education authorities to accelerate these actions and to demonstrate publicly their commitment to academic freedom and human rights.

38 See <http://www.freedomforacademia.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/FfA-Annual-Report-2017.pdf>.

“These findings suggest a threat to Turkey’s standing in the global higher education arena. They also demonstrate the Turkish authorities’ willingness to deprive the public of the benefits of scholarly research in order to punish and eradicate critical thought and discourse.”

RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL

The ability to travel across borders or within one's own country is a crucial part of academic life, necessary for conducting field research, attending academic conferences, studying abroad, and, sometimes, simply attending class.

While states have the right to control entry into their territories, that right is not unlimited: restrictions on travel intended to limit academic content or conduct may violate the rights to academic freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom of opinion. Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights speaks directly to this issue in providing that the right to freedom of expression "shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, *regardless of frontiers...*" (emphasis added). Likewise, restrictions on travel within states may be permissible on security grounds, but measures intended to limit or frustrate access to higher education may violate the right to education. Finally, state decisions denying scholars the right to travel abroad or requiring large groups of scholars

or students to return home from academic travel limit academic expression and exchange, and thus restrict academic freedom.

During this reporting period, SAR reported fifteen incidents of travel restrictions in nine countries, including denial of entry and exit to individuals based on academic content or conduct, as well as restrictions on travel affecting groups within the higher education community.

On November 24, 2017, Russian authorities briefly detained and deported Dr. Henryk Glebocki, a historian from Poland's Institute of National Remembrance (*AFMI 541*). Dr. Glebocki had traveled to Russia to conduct archival research on Russian-Polish relations and gave a lecture at St. Petersburg University on the impact of the Stalinist purges of 1937 and 1938 on Poland. The next day, the Russian Federal Security Service took Dr. Glebocki into custody, held him for 24 hours, and deported him without a clear explanation.



During this reporting period, Israeli authorities have denied entry to scholars, including Katherine Franke, a professor of law at Columbia University (*AFMI 642*), and denied visas and applied other travel restrictions on foreign scholars who work at universities in the West Bank.

In Cameroon, on December 7, 2017, state officials at Douala Airport blocked Patrice Nganang, a professor at the US-based Stony Brook University, from leaving the country and later arrested him in apparent retaliation for an article he wrote criticizing Cameroonian government policies (AFMI 551). On December 27, Cameroonian authorities released Professor Nganang from detention, deported him to the United States, and banned him from returning to the country.

In Hong Kong, on December 16, 2017, authorities rejected visa applications from Wu Rwei-ren and Wu Jieh-min, Taiwanese scholars who were invited to a conference in Hong Kong to speak on the theme, “Colonial Hong Kong: From British colonial to Chinese rule” (AFMI 555). Wu Rwei-ren and Wu Jieh-min have both been publicly critical of Beijing and Hong Kong authorities but had not previously been refused entry. Hong Kong officials did not provide an explanation for the rejected applications.

In Israel, on April 29, 2018, authorities at Ben Gurion Airport detained, interrogated, and deported Katherine Franke, a professor of law, gender, and sexuality at US-based Columbia

University Law School (AFMI 642). Professor Franke was traveling both in her academic capacity, having planned a meeting with graduate students and NGO partners with whom she collaborates on academic programs, and in her capacity as a member of a 20-person delegation of civil rights activists. According to Professor Franke, an Israeli officer accused her of traveling to Israel to promote the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement, and of working for Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), a US-based organization that has endorsed the call for BDS. Professor Franke has denied such claims. An unnamed spokesman for the Israeli Strategic Affairs Ministry told reporters that Professor Franke had been refused entry because of the “prominent role” she plays with JVP. Authorities deported Professor Franke and three others.

And on August 3, Chinese authorities declined to renew a visa for German graduate student David Missal, in connection with a documentary on human rights lawyers that he was producing as part of his studies (AFMI 701). Mr. Missal, who studies journalism, had been conducting interviews with lawyers and activists in China since the spring semester. He reported being warned about the topic of his documentary and at one point was briefly detained by police while conducting interviews (AFMI 644). When Mr. Missal asked the Beijing Entry and Exits Bureau why his visa renewal request was rejected, they told him that his “activities weren’t compatible with a student visa,” but declined to specify what those activities were.

States have taken broad administrative and legislative approaches to restricting scholars’ and students’ travel, including the use of emergency decrees, blanket visa denials, opaque rules, and legislation.

In Turkey, authorities continue to bar thousands of higher education personnel and other civil servants from international travel. Authorities have canceled or confiscated their passports as part of a larger set of measures, including mass terminations and bans on future public service employment, that aim to penalize public employees accused (often with



Travel Restrictions

During this reporting period, SAR issued 15 reports of travel restrictions. Restrictions on travel or movement include improper travel restrictions on higher education leaders, academic and nonacademic staff, and higher education students. These include, but are not limited to, legal, administrative or physical restrictions on travel within a state; restrictions on travel between states; arbitrary restrictions on a scholar or student’s ability to obtain a visa, or other entry or exit documents; denial of future permissions for travel; and retaliation for attempting to travel or after return from travel. Travel restrictions may be imposed by government authorities of the scholar or student’s home state, government authorities of the state to be visited, and/or higher education institutions, leadership, or professional associations.

little or no evidence) of supporting Fethullah Gülen, whom Turkish authorities have claimed was behind a July 2016 coup attempt. Such broad travel restrictions prevent an entire class of scholars from engaging in academic activity abroad. The restrictions in effect are a final step in a career-destroying effort by state authorities, as scholars barred from public service at home are also barred from employment anywhere else in the world. Under the decrees to date, 5,942 scholars and 1,288 administrative staff and their spouses are barred from leaving the country.³⁹

In India, on February 19, 2018, the Ministry of External Affairs issued a letter ordering visa restrictions on scholars of Pakistani origin seeking to attend an Association for Asian Studies (AAS) conference scheduled for July 5–8, 2018, at Ashoka University (AFMI 591). In response to the organizers' request for "political clearance" for the conference, the Ministry stated that it "has no objection from [sic] political angle for the proposed event with foreign participants (as per the list attached) (except participants from Pakistan). . . Kindly note that the Ministry does not recommend participation from Pakistan in the proposed event." Attached to the letter was a list of 57 countries of origin of the proposed participants; Pakistan was struck from the list.

In Tajikistan, the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) established new regulations in February 2018 that would curtail scholar and student travel abroad. According to the regulations, scholars and students wishing to travel outside the country for academic or other official university purposes must obtain permission from the MoES. Scholars and students must submit an application to the



On December 7, 2017, authorities at Cameroon's Douala Airport barred Stony Brook University professor Patrice Nganang from leaving the country and detained him for twenty days, in apparent retaliation for his writings that were critical of the government (AFMI 551).

Suzette Lucas Photography

MoES describing their travels and proposed academic activities abroad no fewer than 15 days prior to departure. They may further be subjected to an interview with MoES officials in order to obtain permission. Within five days of returning to Tajikistan, scholars and students must submit a report to the MoES on the outcomes of their travel. According to a translation of the regulation, this includes an assessment of the "usefulness" of their travels and whether the travel "achiev[ed] good conditions for political, economic, commercial, cultural, scientific and technical development." A scholar or student who fails to comply with the new regulation may face future travel restrictions.

MoES officials publicly claimed that the new regulation was established to improve international education for the country's scholars and students. However, according to an anonymous source from the MoES, the rule's intent was to prevent students from joining "wrong" associations abroad.⁴⁰ For Tajik scholars and students, especially those who may need to travel abroad on short

³⁹ Adjusted based on orders by the government to restore employment status to and lift travel restrictions on certain university personnel.

⁴⁰ See <https://news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/society/20180528/hochesh-za-rubezh-idi-za-razresheniem>.

notice for research purposes or who may speak at conferences about topics their government considers controversial, this new regulation would likely restrict academic freedom. In October 2018, in response to a petition by a coalition of civil society organizations,⁴¹ Tajikistan's prosecutor general ordered to repeal the travel regulation.

In the West Bank, international scholars have reportedly faced restrictions on their ability to enter or remain in the West Bank. In many cases this is despite their having taught at universities in the West Bank for years or even decades. Numerous scholars have had their visas denied outright, while others have reportedly been subjected to administrative burdens, including shifting visa documentation requirements, arbitrarily shortened visa periods, restrictions on their movement within the West Bank, demands for financial bonds of up to 80,000 NIS (roughly \$22,000 USD), and a lack of transparency regarding the application of visa-related rules. The latter especially limits scholars' ability to accept long-term employment at West Bank universities or to assess their ability to return to the West Bank after traveling abroad to attend a conference or conduct research. In July 2018, Birzeit University (BZU) issued a statement indicating that 15 members of its international faculty, several of whom had been at BZU for over a decade, had their visa renewal applications denied or faced other significant delays in the past two years. Eight of these denials—representing one-third of BZU's international faculty—have reportedly occurred since June 2018. A recent report by the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education indicates that as many as half of the foreign passport-holding faculty at several leading Palestinian universities were denied entry or were

otherwise impacted by visa restrictions imposed by Israeli authorities in the past two years.

And in June 2018, the United States Supreme Court upheld the Trump administration's recent executive orders restricting travel to the US from Iran, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Syria, Venezuela, and Yemen. Beyond decreasing diversity among faculty and student bodies, the executive order limits the opportunities for American scholars and students to learn from their counterparts in countries affected by the ban, and it undermines American campuses as spaces of open and diverse cultural and intellectual exchange.

Restrictions on travel for scholars, students, and staff—whether they involve interstate or intrastate travel, denial of an exit or entry visa, or government action that prevents movement by entire classes of higher education personnel—share one common trait: they limit and often penalize the international exchange of ideas. SAR calls upon state and international authorities to adopt and respect policies that fully protect the right to academic travel, including the “freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers.” State authorities should not deny scholars and students entry or exit visas, cancel their passports, force their return to their home countries or otherwise attempt to impede or interfere with academic expression or conduct.

41 See <https://rus.ozodi.org/a/29324856.html>.

“State authorities should not deny scholars and students entry or exit visas, cancel their passports, force their return to their home countries, or otherwise attempt to impede or interfere with academic expression or conduct.”

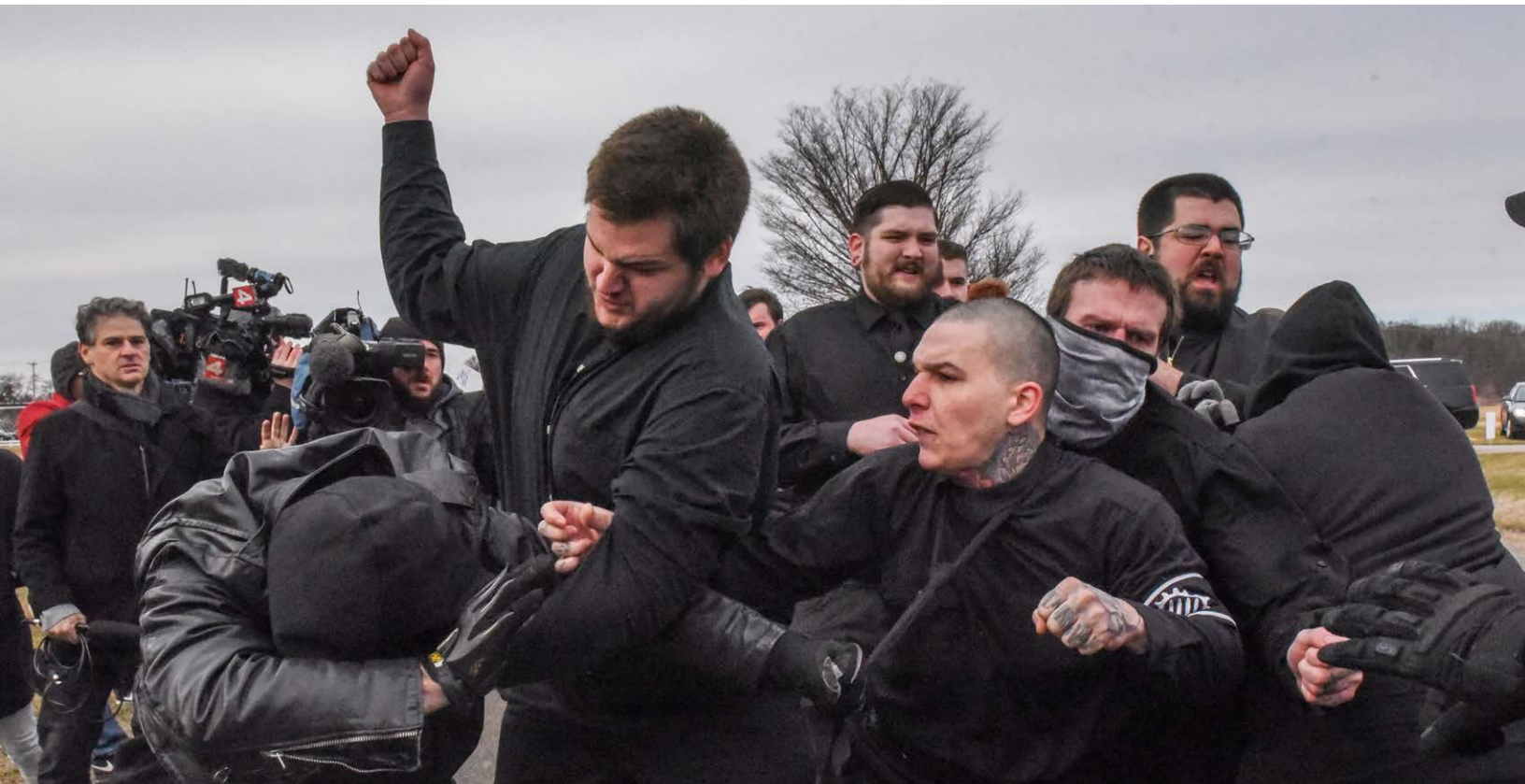
TENSIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Political tensions surrounding campus life in the United States continue to raise concerns. These include pressures from political actors off campus, as well as increasingly heated student protests on campus that have led to violent confrontations.

Political Targeting of Campus Speech

Political actors in the United States have taken a series of public actions purportedly aimed at rooting out political bias on campus. These actions, however, threaten to harm individual professors and students, and the climate for free inquiry and expression.

The nonprofit group Professor Watchlist, whose website says its mission is “to expose and document college professors who discriminate against conservative students and advance leftist propaganda in the classroom,” aggregates information about individual professors including photographs, salary information, links to articles and blog posts about the professors, and brief claims about the professors’ political views. Among its sources are posts by organizations such as Campus Reform, whose website states that it “exposes bias and abuse on the nation’s college campuses.” Professors who have been listed on this and similar websites or who have otherwise been publicly “exposed” (for example through surreptitious video and audio recordings taken



Groups originating off campus have repeatedly sparked violent altercations during protests over the presence of controversial speakers on campus. On March 5, 2018, members of a group known as the Traditionalist Workers Party clashed violently with protesters outside of a speech by Richard Spencer at Michigan State University (AFMI 600).

© 2018 REUTERS/Stephanie Keith

during and outside of class) have become subjects of viral internet traffic and harassment, up to and including death threats. For example, Dr. George Ciccariello-Maher, a professor of politics and global studies at Drexel University, began receiving threats against himself and members of his family in late 2016, after he made a series of satirical political tweets (AFMI 562). The university placed him on administrative leave in October 2017, after which he taught his classes via video link. In December 2017, Professor Ciccariello-Maher resigned from the university. In October 2017, Diablo Valley College (DVC) professor Albert Ponce began receiving violent threats over Facebook, email, and voicemail following a public lecture he gave on race and politics in the US (AFMI 527). The lecture was filmed, reported by major media outlets, and went viral over social media. As recently as August 2018, Professor Ponce continued to report receiving threats of violence against himself and his family.

An organization known as Canary Mission claims to expose individuals on campus who promote “hatred of the USA, Israel and Jews on North American college campuses.” The organization defines hatred as including anyone involved in “[p]romoting or enabling BDS [the movement for boycott, divestment, and sanctions of Israel] in any of its forms.” Canary Mission publishes online profiles of professors and students, including photographs, videos, institutional affiliations, and links to information about friends and colleagues.⁴² The subjects of these profiles have reportedly been the victims of internet trolling. Their profiles have been sent to current and potential employers in an effort to interrupt their careers and expose their

“...real or imagined political bias cannot justify coordinated, online harassment campaigns targeting individual professors and students based solely on their nonviolent expression of particular views.”

alleged views. In an online video, Canary Mission has stated that its mission “is to ensure that today’s radicals are not tomorrow’s employees.”

These projects appear connected to a political perception of universities as hostile to conservative views. This view is echoed in a recent series of state legislative efforts purporting to protect academic freedom and free speech on campus but that may, in effect, do the opposite.⁴³

The model “Campus Free Speech Act,” drafted by a political organization known as the Goldwater Institute, articulates a number of important principles related to academic freedom and free expression, including the importance of the transmission of knowledge through “research, teaching, discussion, and debate.” Crucially, however, it proposes several measures that, if adopted, would threaten university autonomy and could result in severe penalties for students engaging in nonviolent acts of protest. Among other things, the model legislation provides a penalty ranging from a one-year suspension to expulsion for students found to have been responsible more than one time “for infringing the expressive rights of others.” It requires that universities “attempt to remain neutral, as . . . institution[s], on the public policy controversies of the day,” and it would allow both individuals asserting that their expressive rights have been violated and the attorney general to sue a university in federal court for an alleged violation of the law.

As of this report, versions of the model legislation have been adopted in two states and versions of the bill are pending in another five state legislatures. In North Carolina, the bill was signed into law, and on December 15, 2017, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors adopted implementing regulations that include penalties up to and including expulsion for

42 For more information on Canary Mission, see <https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/2018/04/18/exposing-canary-mission>.

43 While SAR’s Academic Freedom Monitor does not normally report on pending legislation, the potential, widespread impact of these rules is significant enough to warrant a discussion here.

anyone who “substantially interferes with the protected free expression rights of others.”⁴⁴ On October 6, 2017, a version of the bill had passed Wisconsin’s State Assembly but was stalled in the Senate. The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents adopted a policy that mirrored the pending legislation, mandating a minimum one-semester suspension for any student found to have twice “materially and substantially disrupted the free expression of others,” and expulsion for a student found to have done so three times.⁴⁵



Starting in October 2017, Diablo Valley College professor Albert Ponce began receiving violent threats in response to a public lecture he gave on campus about race and politics in the United States (AFMI 527).

© 2017 Olivier Alata/The Inquirer (Diablo Valley College)

These policies are, in part, a response to incidents on US campuses that raise legitimate concerns about limitations on academic freedom, including students “shouting down” invited speakers and effectively preventing them from speaking; protests that have become violent; and university policies that constrict the free exchange of ideas on campus. Scholars at Risk has reported on these incidents previously.⁴⁶ However, state-sponsored policies mandating potentially disproportionate punishments for poorly defined transgressions (for example, “substantially disrupted” free expression) creates a risk of overreach and may limit campus speech, despite the stated aims of the bills. Moreover, such policies are unnecessary in light of existing protections for free expression under US law.

Universities, professors, and students exist within the context of, and must engage with, the wider society. And developments within public universities are a legitimate subject of discourse

outside the campus gates. However, real or imagined political bias cannot justify coordinated, online harassment campaigns targeting individual professors and students based solely on their nonviolent expression of particular views. Likewise, legislative measures that impose a rigid system of disproportionate penalties encroach on university autonomy, invite abuse, and risk harming the very academic freedom and principles of free expression the legislation purports to uphold.

Tensions on Campus from External Groups

In several cases involving protests on campus, tensions were sparked or inflamed not by students but by groups originating off campus.

At Colorado State University, on February 2, 2018, an armed group engaged in violence during an on-campus event featuring Charlie Kirk, the conservative activist and founding director of

⁴⁴ See <https://www.carolinajournal.com/news-article/unc-board-of-governors-approves-free-speech-policy/>.

⁴⁵ See <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/midwest/ct-university-of-wisconsin-protest-punishment-20171006-story.html>.

⁴⁶ See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-01-20-university-washington/>, <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-02-01-university-california-berkeley/>, and <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-03-02-middlebury-college/>.

the organization Turning Point USA (AFMI 583). The event was attended by both protesters and counter-protesters who demonstrated peacefully. At the end of the event, however, a group of armed, masked individuals, reportedly members of an extremist group known as the Traditionalist Worker Party, arrived at the event, made Nazi salutes, and clashed violently with the protesters before being dispersed by police.

Just over a week later, on February 10, a student group at the University of Washington (UW) in Seattle invited an organization known as Patriot Prayer onto campus for a rally that had been advertised on Facebook as intended “to encourage conservatives to stand up for freedom in a far-left University.” In advance of the protest, UW authorities announced that they had “credible information that groups from outside the UW community [were] planning to join the event with intent to instigate violence.” The UW International Socialist Organization scheduled a counter-protest. On the day of the rally, the two groups clashed violently, leading to five arrests, with little clarity as to who had instigated the violence (AFMI 586).

And on March 5, 2018, at Michigan State University, a speech by activist Richard Spencer led to violence, as protesters and counter-protesters clashed. Spencer had not been invited to speak on campus. Instead, through his organization known as the National Policy Institute, Spencer requested to give a speech and rented the campus venue (AFMI 600).

These and a number of other recent incidents suggest that partisan political actors frequently see universities as a tool for increasing their own visibility. Controversial speakers often draw protesters who then draw counter-protesters, making confrontation more likely. As these cases demonstrate, even a few isolated acts of violence among largely nonviolent attendees may generate news coverage. Conflict, including physical conflict, is incentivized. It is therefore crucial that universities take action to avert

physical confrontations and ensure the safety of everyone on campus. And university community members must adhere to core higher education values, including social responsibility, and pursue a campus-wide commitment to the serious exchange of ideas, evidence, and reason over sensationalized confrontation.

THREATS TO INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

Over the last year, ongoing state actions in Central and Eastern Europe have encroached on university autonomy and threatened the continuing operation of several higher education institutions and research centers.

In Hungary, the Central European University (CEU) continued to face the threat of potential closure as a result of an amendment to the country's higher education law. As SAR reported in *Free to Think 2017*, the amendment required foreign-accredited higher education institutions in Hungary to maintain a campus in their countries of accreditation. CEU was accredited in the United States, but did not maintain a campus there. The amendment did not mention CEU specifically; however, it appeared to impact CEU alone. This fact, coupled with public statements by government authorities and allies critical of CEU, strongly suggested that the amendment

specifically targeted the university and intended to punish it for its liberal research and teaching and for its affiliation with its founder, the prominent Hungarian-American financier and philanthropist George Soros. On October 3, 2017, CEU entered into an agreement with US-based Bard College to engage in joint teaching activities on its upstate New York campus, which reportedly would have brought CEU into compliance with the amendment before the January 1, 2018, deadline. The agreement required the approval of the Hungarian government. Less than two weeks after CEU entered into the agreement, the Hungarian parliament voted to postpone the implementation of the amendment; officials indicated that approval of the CEU-Bard agreement would be delayed as well. As of this report, the status of both the amendment and recognition of CEU's compliance remain unresolved. In April, CEU signed an agreement with the city of Vienna, Austria to



Faculty, students, and alumni rally in support of the European University at St. Petersburg (EUSP), which faced uncertainty after it was stripped of its license in 2016. In August 2018, after repeated license applications from EUSP and appeals from the local and international community, authorities reinstated EUSP's license.

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establish a satellite campus there. The university has indicated that it will move to Vienna should its continued operations in Budapest become impossible.

Also in Hungary, on August 10, 2018, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's government issued a decree that aims to eliminate gender studies at Hungarian universities by defunding and refusing to accredit degrees in that subject by September 2019. Currently, only two universities in Hungary offer degree programs in gender studies: Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), a public university, and CEU. A government official who announced the decision claimed that gender studies programs are not economically viable. At the same time, the official also stated that "the Hungarian government is of the clear view that people are born either men or women. They lead their lives the way they think best, but beyond this, the Hungarian state does not wish to spend public funds on education in this area." Neither ELTE nor CEU were consulted prior to the announcement of the decree and both were given only 24 hours to respond to the legislation.



Other Attacks

During this reporting period, SAR issued reports for 30 "other" incidents.

These include incidents that do not fit squarely within one or more of the five defined types of conduct, yet are of such importance, scale, scope, and/or duration that they have already, or have the potential, to significantly impair higher education functions, academic freedom, or the exercise of human rights by members of higher education communities. Such incidents may include occupation or closing of higher education campuses; destruction of higher education facilities, materials, or infrastructures; systematic or prolonged harassment, or threats against members of higher education communities; systematic limits on access to higher education; and/or systematic discrimination based on gender, race, or other grounds in access to, employment within, or other elements relating to higher education.

In Russia, the future of the European University at St. Petersburg (EUSP) has been in question for more than a year. In March 2017, the Federal Service for the Supervision of Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor) revoked EUSP's license for administrative violations, such as the absence of a faculty gym and the failure to display anti-alcohol leaflets; sources suggested at the time that, in fact, the closure arose from complaints by a prominent, conservative politician who objected to the school's gender studies courses. Having reportedly cured all of its alleged violations, EUSP has repeatedly sought but was denied reinstatement of its license. In January 2018, authorities evicted EUSP from its main campus building, moving the university's operations to another, nearby building. Finally, in August 2018, EUSP officials announced that Rosobrnadzor restored the university's license after it filed a fourth license application. As of this report, EUSP is planning to welcome new students as well as students who were forced to leave the university in 2017.

Prior to this positive development at EUSP, another institution in Russia began facing new threats. On June 20, 2018, Rosobrnadzor officials revoked the accreditation of the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences (known as Shaninka) (AFMI 672). According to Rosobrnadzor, the university failed to pass its latest inspection, citing violations related to lecture hall space and faculty credentials, among others, and allegations that some courses "failed to give students practical skills." Established in 1995, Shaninka offers joint degrees with the University of Manchester in the UK and is regarded as one of Russia's most prestigious and independent higher education institutions. Stripped of accreditation, Shaninka degrees will no longer be recognized in Russia and male students generally will not be able to defer military service while attending Shaninka. The university has however made efforts to accommodate current and future students by offering a joint program taught in partnership with the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2018/06/25/russian-agency-revokes-accreditation-private-university>.

Russian civil society organizations engaged in academic activities are also threatened. For example, on September 7, 2017, Russian authorities informed the Sova Center for Information and Analysis (SOVA Center), an NGO that conducts research and monitoring of hate crimes and extremist movements in Russia, that it was in violation of a Russian law that prohibits participating in the work of foreign organizations deemed “undesirable” (AFMI 519). The alleged basis for the charge was that the SOVA Center’s website listed as past supporters the National Endowment for Democracy and the Open Society Foundations,⁴⁸ both of which had been labeled “undesirable” and banned from operating in Russia in 2015. The listings contained hyperlinks to the organizations’ websites, which had been included years before the establishment of the “undesirable organizations” law. The charges were later dropped on statute of limitations grounds.

Similarly, the Levada Center, a leading independent research and polling center, which was ordered to register as a “foreign agent” in 2016,⁴⁹ announced in January 2018 that it would no longer publish polling related to the March 2018 Russian presidential election (AFMI 574). Levada Center officials cited fears that further publication of polling results might bring potential repercussions, ranging from fines to being forced by the government to shut down, for allegedly “meddling” in the election as a foreign agent.

These incidents demonstrate a spectrum of the tactics states and their allies may enact to retaliate, restrict or otherwise impede the research, teaching, or publishing activities at higher education institutions. As such, these actions represent serious threats to academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Particularly in cases where entire institutions are threatened with closure, the resulting harms are not limited to those institutions and their personnel. They extend to states’ higher education sectors and beyond, by silencing

academic discourse and indicating to society that institutions associated with certain values or ideas are disfavored.

Accordingly, SAR renews its call for state authorities and higher education officials, particularly in Hungary and Russia, to publicly renew their commitment to core higher education values, including academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Specifically, SAR urges Russian officials to reverse the negative actions against the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, the Levada Center, and the SOVA Center and to ensure their continued operation free from interference or threats. SAR further urges Hungarian officials to acknowledge CEU’s compliance with the recent amendment to the higher education law, to remove any further impediments to CEU’s continued operation in Budapest, and to ensure that Hungarian universities can offer accredited gender studies programs.

48 The National Endowment for Democracy and the Open Society Foundations are Scholars at Risk funders.

49 See <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2016-09-05-levada-center/>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The data reflected in *Free to Think 2018* present a continuing crisis of attacks on higher education communities around the world, with notable pressures in China, Iran, Turkey, the United States, and beyond. Violent attacks on the university space; imprisonments and prosecutions; re-education and psychological abuse; the use of force against students; terminations and expulsions; travel restrictions; attacks on institutional autonomy; and other pressures shrink the space for higher education communities to develop and convey knowledge and serve society, especially on issues of critical importance to scientific advancements, public policy, and democratic debate. Recognizing that these incidents—despite variations in source, target, type of attack, and location—are part of a single global phenomenon is a critical first step in devising solutions. The next step is to encourage a robust response at the international and state levels, from within higher education itself, and from civil society and the public at large.

Scholars at Risk (SAR) urges states, higher education leaders, civil society, and the public at large in all countries to:

- **recognize publicly the problem of attacks on higher education**, their negative consequences, and the responsibility of states to protect higher education communities within their territories against such attacks;
- **abstain from direct or indirect involvement in attacks** of any type on higher education, including by undue external interference or compulsion, by criminal, legislative, or administrative actions, or by travel restrictions that punish or deter nonviolent academic conduct or expression;
- demand prompt, thorough, and transparent investigations of attacks on higher education communities, as well as all reasonable efforts to **hold perpetrators accountable**;
- take all reasonable measures to **ensure adequate security** for all members of higher education communities;
- **review laws used to prosecute scholars and students, and amend or repeal them as necessary** to ensure that scholars and students can exercise their rights to academic freedom and other constituent rights;
- **respect the right of students to engage in peaceful, organized expression** and refrain from violence or other inappropriate responses to such expression;
- **lift restrictions on the travel, movement, or residence** of scholars, students, and other higher education personnel, and refrain from future restrictions that are based on nonviolent academic conduct or expression; and
- **contribute to efforts aimed at reinforcing principles of academic freedom and institutional autonomy**, including by reaffirming their commitment in public statements, policies, and practices to the principles that ideas are not crimes and that critical discourse is not disloyalty.

In China especially, SAR urges state authorities to:

- unconditionally **release** detained scholars and students, including those held in re-education camps and other facilities intended for the Uyghur minority community, and pending this, to **disclose their location** and **ensure access to medical care, legal counsel, and family**; and

- **refrain from future detention of higher education personnel** relating to peaceful academic activity, expression, or association.

In Iran especially, SAR urges state authorities, higher education leaders, and civil society to:

- **release unconditionally scholars and students** held for nonviolent academic activity, expression, or association, and pending this, to **ensure due process and access to medical care, legal counsel, and family**; and
- **refrain from future arrest and prosecution of scholars and students** relating to their peaceful academic activity, expression, or association.

In Turkey especially, SAR urges state authorities, higher education leaders, and civil society to:

- **ensure an effective and transparent review for all higher education personnel who have been subject to suspension, termination, expulsion, or other professional retaliation** in connection with the Peace Petition, investigations related to the 2016 coup attempt, or related events;
- **ensure due process**, consistent with international human rights standards, for all professors, students, and other higher education personnel subject to civil or criminal actions;
- **suspend and reverse actions** taken against Turkish higher education institutions and personnel, including wrongful arrests, termination and suspensions, and restrictions on travel; and
- **restore and strengthen institutional autonomy**, including by returning to university faculty and Higher Education Council officials their role in the rector appointment process.

In the United States especially, SAR urges state authorities, higher education leaders, student activists, and civil society to:

- **reconsider proposed policies that narrow acceptable speech on campus** and consider other reasonable steps that maximize free expression on campus, preserve university autonomy in responding to disruptive behavior, and avoid politicization of university policies and actions relating to campus speech;
- **develop campus policies aimed at fostering university values** that build on traditions supporting the free, open exchange of ideas; and
- **reject online and offline efforts that seek to intimidate, threaten, and punish professors and students** based on their views.

APPENDIX: TABLE OF INCIDENTS

The below table includes 294 attacks arising from 206 verified incidents in 47 countries, as reported by Scholars at Risk's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project from September 1, 2017, to August 31, 2018. Note that the total number of attacks exceeds the total number of incidents reported because a single incident may involve more than one type of conduct. Figures cited only include independently verified incidents. Over this reporting period, the project evaluated more than 338 reported attacks in 55 countries. Incidents are listed below in reverse chronological order and are described by date, the country where the incident took place, the institutions implicated in the incident, and the type(s) of attack associated with the incident. For more detailed information on the below incidents, including links to sources cited in incident reports, please visit the Academic Freedom Monitoring Project website at <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/monitoringproject>.







AFMI	Date	Country	Institution						
721	08/30/18	South Africa	University of KwaZulu-Natal	X					X
720	08/30/18	USA	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	X					
719	08/29/18	India	Rajasthan University	X					
718	08/27/18	China	Peking University						X
717	08/24/18	China	Various Institutions		X				X
716	08/21/18	Sri Lanka	South Eastern University of Sri Lanka	X					
715	08/17/18	India	Mahatma Gandhi Central University	X					
714	08/17/18	South Africa	University of KwaZulu-Natal	X					X
713	08/15/18	Afghanistan	Mowud Education Center	X					
712	08/15/18	Bangladesh	Eden College		X	X			
711	08/15/18	China	Guizhou University				X		
710	08/13/18	South Africa	University of KwaZulu-Natal	X					
709	08/13/18	India	Jawaharlal Nehru University	X					
708	08/13/18	Nigeria	Kwara State College of Education, Ilorin	X	X	X			
707	08/13/18	Turkey	Hacettepe University		X				
706	08/10/18	Japan	Tokyo Medical University						X
705	08/08/18	Turkey	Unaffiliated		X				
704	08/08/18	China	Shanghai Normal University						X
703	08/05/18	Bangladesh	Sunderland University	X	X	X			
702	08/04/18	Bangladesh	Various Institutions	X					
701	08/03/18	China	Tsinghua University					X	
700	08/01/18	China	Unaffiliated		X				
699	07/31/18	Turkey	İnönü University		X			X	
698	07/30/18	Turkey	Gazi University		X				
697	07/28/18	South Sudan	University of Cambridge		X	X			
696	07/27/18	India	Allahabad University	X	X	X			
695	07/26/18	Nicaragua	American University in Managua	X					
694	07/18/18	China	Peking University				X		
693	07/17/18	Turkey	Kadir Has University, Koç University			X			
692	07/14/18	Israel	Hind al-Husaini College		X				X
691	07/13/18	Nicaragua	National Autonomous University of Nicaragua	X					
690	07/10/18	China	Unirule Institute of Economics						X

 Killings, Violence, Disappearances  Imprisonment  Prosecution  Loss of Position  Travel Restrictions  Other






AFMI	Date	Country	Institution						
689	07/08/18	Turkey	Various Institutions				X	X	
688	07/08/18	Bangladesh	Jagannath University and Chittagong University	X					
687	07/07/18	Turkey	Middle East Technical University		X	X			
686	07/06/18	Indonesia	Various Institutions	X					X
685	07/04/18	Iran	University of Tehran		X	X			
684	07/04/18	Turkey	Unaffiliated		X	X			
683	07/03/18	Bangladesh	University of Dhaka	X	X				
682	07/03/18	Turkey	Melikşah University		X	X			
681	07/02/18	Bangladesh	University of Rajshahi	X					
680	07/02/18	Bangladesh	University of Dhaka	X					
679	07/01/18	Bangladesh	University of Dhaka		X	X			
678	06/30/18	Bangladesh	University of Dhaka	X					
677	06/27/18	Saudi Arabia	King Saud University		X				
676	06/27/18	Argentina	University of Buenos Aires	X	X				
675	06/26/18	Thailand	Chulalongkorn University						X
674	06/23/18	Nicaragua	National Autonomous University of Nicaragua	X					
673	06/21/18	Turkey	Marmara University			X			
672	06/20/18	Russia	Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences						X
671	06/19/18	Yemen	Sana'a University		X				
670	06/19/18	India	Periyar University		X	X			
669	06/18/18	Nigeria	Adekunle Ajasin University	X	X				
668	06/14/18	China	Xiamen University				X		
667	06/11/18	Iran	University of Tehran		X	X			
666	06/09/18	Ethiopia	Dilla University	X					
665	06/06/18	India	Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University		X	X	X		
664	06/05/18	Turkey	Marmara University		X	X			
663	06/04/18	Afghanistan	Polytechnic University of Kabul	X					
662	06/02/18	Turkey	Unknown		X				
661	05/29/18	China	University of Technology, Malaysia		X				
660	05/28/18	Thailand	Thammasat University, Chulalongkorn University			X			
659	05/28/18	Nicaragua	National University of Engineering	X					
658	05/27/18	Nicaragua	Central American University of Nicaragua	X					
657	05/26/18	Turkey	İstanbul Technical University		X	X			
656	05/24/18	Egypt	University of Washington		X	X			
655	05/24/18	Bolivia	Public University of El Alto	X					
654	05/22/18	Turkey	Unaffiliated			X			
653	05/22/18	Turkey	Uşak University		X	X			
652	05/21/18	China	Zhongnan University of Economics and Law				X		
651	05/18/18	Morocco	Ibn Zohr University	X					
650	05/16/18	Yemen	University of Aden	X					
649	05/15/18	Senegal	University Gaston Berger	X					
648	05/15/18	Saudi Arabia	Saudi Higher Education Institutions		X				
647	05/12/18	Turkey	Pamukkale University		X	X			







AFMI	Date	Country	Institution						
646	05/11/18	Turkey	Middle East Technical University						X
645	05/03/18	India	Aligarh Muslim University	X					
644	05/02/18	China	Tsinghua University				X		
643	05/01/18	Egypt	Damanhour University				X		
642	04/29/18	Israel	Columbia University					X	
641	04/28/18	China	Unaffiliated		X	X			
640	04/23/18	Nicaragua	Polytechnic University of Nicaragua	X					
639	04/22/18	China	Peking University				X		X
638	04/16/18	Chile	Arcis University	X					
637	04/15/18	Iran	Imperial College London		X	X			
636	04/12/18	Turkey	Various Institutions	X	X				
635	04/12/18	Turkey	Osmangazi University	X	X				
634	04/12/18	Turkey	İstanbul Technical University, Özyeğin University			X			
633	04/11/18	Thailand	Chulalongkorn University						X
632	04/11/18	Nigeria	Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko	X					
631	04/09/18	Turkey	İstanbul University, Yıldız Technical University, Van Yüzüncü Yıl Technical University			X			
630	04/08/18	Nigeria	University of Maiduguri	X					
629	04/08/18	Bangladesh	University of Dhaka	X					X
628	04/05/18	Turkey	Osmangazi University	X					
627	04/05/18	Turkey	Marmara University, İstanbul University			X			
626	04/04/18	Kenya	University of Nairobi	X					
625	04/04/18	Turkey	Galatasaray University, İstanbul University			X			
624	04/03/18	Indonesia	Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology			X			
623	04/01/18	China	Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture				X		
622	04/01/18	Turkey	Hacettepe University		X				
621	03/31/18	Turkey	Boğaziçi University		X				
620	03/27/18	Chile	University of Chile	X					
619	03/26/18	Palestine	Al-Azhar University	X					
618	03/25/18	Ethiopia	Various Institutions		X	X			
617	03/25/18	Turkey	Boğaziçi University		X				
616	03/23/18	Guatemala	Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala	X					
615	03/23/18	India	Jawaharlal Nehru University	X	X				
614	03/22/18	France	University of Montpellier	X					
613	03/22/18	Turkey	Boğaziçi University		X	X			
612	03/22/18	Turkey	Boğaziçi University		X				
611	03/21/18	Turkey	Melikşah University		X	X			
610	03/14/18	Iran	Institute for Advanced Studies in Basic Sciences				X		
609	03/12/18	Palestine	An-Najah National University		X	X			
608	03/12/18	Iran	University of Tehran		X	X			
607	03/11/18	Iran	University of Tehran		X	X			

 Killings, Violence, Disappearances  Imprisonment  Prosecution  Loss of Position  Travel Restrictions  Other

AFMI	Date	Country	Institution						
606	03/11/18	Iran	Amir Kabir University	X					
605	03/09/18	Turkmenistan	Osmaniye Korkut Ata University		X	X		X	
604	03/08/18	Ethiopia	Ambo University		X				
603	03/07/18	Palestine	Birzeit University	X	X				X
602	03/06/18	Tanzania	University of Dar Es Salaam		X	X			
601	03/05/18	Venezuela	University of Los Andes		X				
600	03/05/18	USA	Michigan State University	X					
599	03/03/18	Bangladesh	Shahjalal University of Science and Technology	X					
598	03/03/18	Turkey	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University		X	X			
597	03/01/18	South Africa	University of Zululand						X
596	02/28/18	Iran	Islamic Azad University				X		
595	02/27/18	Kenya	Meru University of Science and Technology	X					
594	02/25/18	Iran	Tehran University		X	X			
593	02/22/18	South Africa	Durban University of Technology	X					
592	02/20/18	Nigeria	Lagos State Polytechnic	X					
591	02/19/18	India	Ashoka University					X	
590	02/19/18	Nigeria	University of Maiduguri	X					
589	02/14/18	New Zealand	University of Canterbury						X
588	02/12/18	Turkey	Melikşah University		X	X			
587	02/11/18	Sudan	University of Khartoum	X					
586	02/10/18	USA	University of Washington	X					
585	02/08/18	Turkey	Gazi University		X				
584	02/07/18	Congo (DRC)	University of Kisangani			X			
583	02/02/18	USA	Colorado State University	X					
582	01/31/18	The Gambia	University of the Gambia		X	X			
581	01/29/18	China	Xinjiang Pedagogical University		X				
580	01/26/18	Hong Kong	Hong Kong Baptist University				X		
579	01/26/18	Myanmar	Various Institutions				X		
578	01/24/18	Iran	Imam Sadiq University	X	X	X			
577	01/22/18	India	Jawaharlal Nehru University	X	X				
576	01/22/18	Pakistan	New Islamia Public College Shabqadar	X					
575	01/16/18	Sudan	Ahfad University for Women		X				
574	01/16/18	Russia	Levada Center						X
573	01/15/18	Pakistan	Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology		X				
572	01/12/18	Turkey	Various Institutions				X	X	
571	01/12/18	Sudan	Aldalang University	X	X	X			
570	01/11/18	Hong Kong	Hong Kong Polytechnic University				X		
569	01/10/18	Sudan	Ahfad University for Women	X					
568	01/09/18	Sudan	University of Khartoum	X	X	X			X
567	01/09/18	India	Rajasthan University	X	X				X
566	01/05/18	Iran	University of Tehran		X	X			
565	01/01/18	Iran	Unknown		X				

AFMI	Date	Country	Institution						
564	12/31/17	Turkey	Yıldız Technical University, Dokuz Eylül University		X	X		X	
563	12/30/17	Iran	University of Tehran	X					
562	12/29/17	USA	Drexel University				X		X
561	12/28/17	Turkey	Hacettepe University		X				
560	12/27/17	Hong Kong	Hong Kong Baptist University				X		
559	12/27/17	Turkey	Fatih University		X				
558	12/24/17	Turkey	Various Institutions				X	X	X
557	12/22/17	Ukraine	National Pedagogical Dragomanov University	X					
556	12/21/17	Turkey	Turgut Özal University		X	X			
555	12/16/17	Hong Kong	Academia Sinica					X	
554	12/16/17	Hong Kong	Hong Kong University of Technology				X		
553	12/14/17	Palestine	Al Quds University, Birzeit University						X
552	12/11/17	Iran	Various Institutions				X		
551	12/07/17	Cameroon	SUNY Stony Brook		X	X		X	
550	12/06/17	Turkey	Boğaziçi University		X	X			
549	12/02/17	Denmark	Copenhagen Business School			X			
548	12/01/17	China	Unaffiliated	X	X				
547	12/01/17	China	Xinjiang University		X				
546	12/01/17	Pakistan	Agricultural Training Institute	X					
545	11/28/17	USA	Joliet Junior College		X				
544	11/28/17	Turkey	Dokuz Eylül University		X	X		X	
543	11/27/17	Turkey	Özgür University		X				
542	11/27/17	Argentina	Institute of Snow, Ice and Environmental Research			X			
541	11/24/17	Russia	Institute of National Remembrance					X	
540	11/17/17	Turkey	Marmara University		X				
539	11/16/17	Liberia	University of Liberia	X					
538	11/10/17	Turkey	Lehigh University			X			
537	11/07/17	Bangladesh	North South University						X
536	10/26/17	Ukraine	National Pedagogical Dragomanov University	X					
535	10/25/17	Spain	University of Salamanca						X
534	10/23/17	Pakistan	Quaid-i-Azam University	X	X	X			
533	10/20/17	Turkey	University of Economics and Technology, Center for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies		X				
532	10/19/17	Turkey	Afyon Kocatepe University		X	X			
531	10/19/17	Turkey	Hitit University		X	X			
530	10/10/17	Turkey	Istanbul University	X	X				
529	10/10/17	Kenya	Technical University of Mombasa	X					
528	10/09/17	Thailand	Thammasat University			X			
527	10/01/17	USA	Diablo Valley College						X
526	09/26/17	Kenya	University of Nairobi	X					
525	09/25/17	Malaysia	Nottingham University Malaysia		X			X	X
524	09/23/17	India	Banaras Hindu University	X					

 Killings, Violence, Disappearances  Imprisonment  Prosecution  Loss of Position  Travel Restrictions  Other

AFMI	Date	Country	Institution						
523	09/14/17	Turkey	Various Institutions					X	
522	09/11/17	India	Moulana Azad National Urdu University						X
521	09/11/17	South Africa	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	X					X
520	09/08/17	Honduras	National Autonomous University of Honduras	X	X	X			
519	09/07/17	Russia	SOVA Centre for Information and Analysis			X			
518	09/05/17	Turkey	Düzce University		X				
517	09/01/17	Zimbabwe	Great Zimbabwe University				X		
516 ⁵⁰	09/01/17	USA	University of Texas-Austin	X					
September 1, 2017 - August 31, 2018 Total:				79	88	60	22	15	30

Total Attacks: 294

APPENDIX: METHODOLOGY

The **SAR Academic Freedom Monitoring Project** aims to identify, assess, and track incidents involving one or more of six (6) types of conduct which may constitute violations of academic freedom and/or the human rights of members of higher education communities. The project consists of Scholars at Risk staff working in partnership with higher education professionals, researchers, and advocates around the world serving as monitors. Each monitor focuses on a specific country or region, sometimes serving as a lead researcher supervising teams of other monitors and/or student researchers. Monitors and their researchers may work within or external to the country or region being covered, following a detailed system developed by Scholars at Risk for identifying, reporting on, and analyzing incidents of attacks on higher education systems, institutions or personnel. Anonymity of monitors is maintained where warranted by personal security or other concerns.

The six types of conduct monitored include: (1) killings, violence, and disappearances; (2) wrongful imprisonment/detention; (3) wrongful prosecution; (4) wrongful dismissal/loss of position/expulsion from study; (5) restrictions on travel or movement; and (6) other. The “other” type acknowledges that it is not easy to anticipate all relevant types of attacks that the monitoring project might expose and leaves room for researchers to include significant incidents which do not fit squarely elsewhere. Over time, regular reports of similar kinds of conduct in the “other” type may justify adding an additional delimited type. “Other” types of attacks identified by the project include military targeting, occupation or use of higher education facilities; forced university closures; and systematic discrimination in access to higher education. For three of the types—travel, dismissal/loss of position/expulsion, and prosecution—the project reports only on incidents bearing some nexus to academic speech, content or conduct. For the other three types—imprisonment; killings, violence, and disappearances; and other significant events—the project requires only a nexus to members of higher education communities or higher education institutions and infrastructures. For example, the dismissal of a professor or student is included if there appears to be a nexus between the professor or student’s academic speech, conduct or the content of research, writing, teaching, or lecturing. The killing of a professor or student is included even if there is no specific link to academic speech, conduct or the content, if it satisfies the definition of “attack” and is therefore likely to contribute to insecurity and have a chilling effect on higher education, intentional or otherwise.

Monitors submit reports to Scholars at Risk on a rolling basis. Monitors are encouraged to focus on the defined types of attacks, but are also instructed to exercise an “inclusion preference,” reporting corroborated incidents which may be difficult to fit within the five defined types, but which raise significant concerns about the security and freedom of higher education communities. This allows the broadest collection of initial data, data that over time will help support analysis of scope and frequency. In all cases, Scholars at Risk staff provide a secondary level of review and work within the limits of available resources, and with individual monitors, to corroborate reported incidents and to evaluate when an incident rises to the level of reportable “attack” for project purposes. Sources typically include local, national, and international media outlets and, where possible, primary sources such as interviews with victims, witnesses or bystanders, and court, government, or university documents. Incidents corroborated by sufficient reliable sources are deemed “verified” and published as warranting public attention, including via email digests, website, social media, and summary reports. Scholars at Risk welcomes submissions of additional corroborating, clarifying, or contradictory information which may be used to further research or otherwise improve data reported.

⁵⁰ AFMI numbering continues from the most recent incident reported in *Free to Think 2017* (see <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/resources/free-to-think-2017/>). For a comprehensive index of monitoring incidents, please visit <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/monitoringproject>.

SAR PUBLICATIONS & MATERIALS

Materials are available on Scholars at Risk's website at www.scholarsatrisk.org.



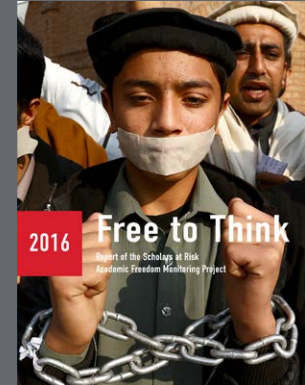
Report of the Scholars at Risk 2018 Global Congress



Promoting Higher Education Values Guide



Free to Think 2017



Free to Think 2016



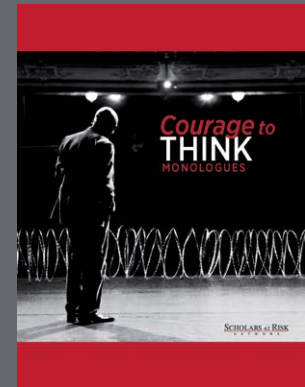
Free to Think 2015



Intellectual-HRDs and Claims for Academic Freedom under Human Rights Law, Int'l J. H.Rts., Vol. 18, Issue 7-8, pp. 898-920



The University and the Nation: Safeguarding Higher Education in Tunisia and Beyond



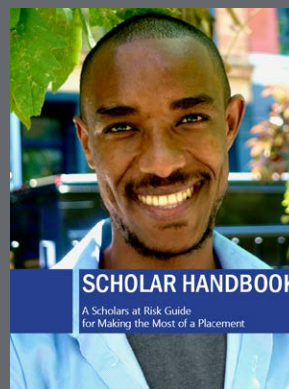
Courage to Think Monologues: Stories of Threatened Scholars



Getting Involved: Guide to SAR Membership and Activities



How to Host Handbook



Scholar Handbook



Speaker Series Handbook

Thousands of educators and academics are killed, imprisoned, attacked, or threatened around the world each year because of what they teach, write, or say. This is dangerous for all of us. It not only destroys lives, but it also denies everyone the benefit of expert knowledge, destabilizes vulnerable societies, and cripples the healthy public discourse that sustains democracy.

Scholars at Risk is an international network of over 500 higher education institutions and thousands of individuals in 39 countries that is leading the charge in protecting and offering sanctuary to threatened scholars and students. Our mission is to protect higher education communities and their members from violent and coercive attacks, and by doing so to expand the space in society for reason and evidence-based approaches to resolving conflicts and solving problems. We meet this mission through direct protection of individuals, advocacy aimed at preventing attacks and increasing accountability, and research and learning initiatives that promote academic freedom and related values.

Institutions and individuals are invited to take part in this important work by joining the network, offering to host at-risk scholars, organizing campus events, advocating on behalf of imprisoned academics and students, conducting research through SAR's Academic Freedom Monitoring Project and working groups, proposing your own projects, and donating to SAR to sustain these activities. To learn more about SAR activities, network membership, or how you or your institution might benefit, please visit www.scholarsatrisk.org.

SCHOLARS AT RISK NETWORK

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2018

Free to Think

Report of the Scholars at Risk
Academic Freedom Monitoring Project

SCHOLARS AT RISK
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