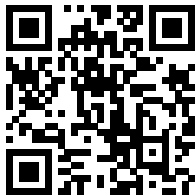


# Human Rights session

Ian Jauslin, Joel L. Lebowitz

For links and further details: <http://ian.jauslin.org/talks/25hr-smm129/>



The existence and validity of human rights are not written in the stars. The ideals concerning the conduct of men toward each other and the desirable structure of the community have been conceived and taught by enlightened individuals in the course of history. Those ideals and convictions which resulted from historical experience, from the craving for beauty and harmony, have been readily accepted in theory by man – and at all times, have been trampled upon by the same people under the pressure of their animal instincts. A large part of history is therefore replete with the struggle for those human rights, an eternal struggle in which a final victory can never be won. But to tire in that struggle would mean the ruin of society.

– Albert Einstein

## Unjustly imprisoned scholars

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- Abdul Jalil Al-Singace (Bahrain), Mechanical engineer, jailed since 2011 for pro-democracy and human rights activism. Life imprisonment.<sup>[1]</sup>
- Ilham Tohti (China), Economist, jailed since 2014, sentenced to life imprisonment for “splitting the state”.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Nasser bin Ghaith (United Arab Emirates), Economist, jailed since 2015 for criticizing Egypt’s human rights record. Sentenced to 10 years in 2017, and life in 2024.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Unjustly imprisoned scholars

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- Ahmadrezza Djalali (Iran), Medical researcher, jailed since 2016, on death row, for refusing to cooperate with Iranian intelligence.<sup>[4]</sup> Returned to Evin prison in late summer 2025<sup>[5]</sup>.
- Rahile Dawut (China), Ethnographer, jailed since 2017, secretly sentenced to life in prison. Only acknowledged publicly in 2023.<sup>[6]</sup>
- Azat Miftakhov (Russia), Mathematician, jailed since 2019, sentenced to 6 years, released and re-arrested in 2023, sentenced to 4 more years.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Unjustly imprisoned scholars

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- Narges Mohammadi (Iran), Engineer, jailed since 2021.<sup>[8]</sup> Temporarily released in December 2024, re-arrested on December 12, 2025<sup>[9]</sup>
- Igbal Abilov (Azerbaijan), Ethnographer, jailed since 2024, sentenced to 18 years,<sup>[10]</sup> for collaborating with an Armenian professor.
- Bahruz Samadov (Azerbaijan), Political scientist, jailed since 2024, sentenced to 15 years<sup>[11]</sup> for his scholarship critical of the government.

## Unjustly imprisoned scholars



- Russia: Researchers on hypersonic flight<sup>[12]</sup>
  - ▶ In Prison: Anatoly Maslov (2022-)<sup>[13]</sup>, Alexandr Shiblyuk (2022-)<sup>[13]</sup>, Alexandr Kuranov (2021-)<sup>[14]</sup>, Anatoly Gubanov (2020-)<sup>[15]</sup>, Valery Golubkin (2021-)<sup>[16]</sup>
  - ▶ Awaiting trial: Vladislav Galkin (2023-)<sup>[12]</sup>,
  - ▶ Died in custody: Viktor Kudryavtsev (2018-2021)<sup>[17]</sup>, Dmitry Kolker (2022)<sup>[12]</sup>, Roman Kovalyov (2018-2022)<sup>[18]</sup>
  - ▶ Released: Vladimir Lapygin (2016-2020)<sup>[19]</sup>
  - ▶ House arrest: Valery Zvegintsev (2022-)<sup>[13]</sup>

## Unjustly imprisoned scholars

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- USA: international students and postdocs imprisoned in spring 2025:
  - ▶ Released pending charges: Kseniia Petrova (02/16-06/12)<sup>[20][21]</sup>,
  - ▶ Deportation order: Mahmoud Khalil (03/08-06/20)<sup>[22][23][24]</sup>,
  - ▶ Self-Deported: Alireza Doroudi (03/25-06/1)<sup>[25][26]</sup>,
  - ▶ Released: Badar Khan Suri (03/17-05/14)<sup>[27]</sup>, Rümeyssa Öztürk (03/25-05/09)<sup>[28]</sup>, Doğukan Günaydın (03/27-05/22)<sup>[29][30]</sup>, Mohsen Mahdawi (04/14-04/30)<sup>[31]</sup> .

## Governments controlling academic activity

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- USA: Restrictions on federal research on topics such as diversity, gender, inequality, climate change<sup>[32]</sup>; withholding federal grant money on such topics<sup>[33][34]</sup> Exerting control on universities by withholding funding<sup>[35][36]</sup>. 1,879 student visas revoked (later reinstated)<sup>[37]</sup>. Travel restrictions for Texan academics to China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Venezuela<sup>[38]</sup>.
- China: Comprehensive push to enforce an ideological bias in universities.<sup>[39]</sup>: “Patriotic Education Law”<sup>[40]</sup>, enforcing the policies of the CCCP at the Chinese Academy of Science.<sup>[41][34]</sup>
- Canada: Restricting scientific collaboration in certain fields with China, Iran, and Russia<sup>[41]</sup>, and imposing restrictions on admissions of foreign students<sup>[42]</sup>

## Scholars caught up in political upheaval

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- Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
- Sudanese civil war.
- Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.
- Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- February 2021 coup in Myanmar, followed by repression and arrests.
- Mass incarceration of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, China starting in 2017.
- Failed 2015 coup in Türkiye (firings, arrests and travel bans en masse).
- Yemen civil war.

# Scholar Rescue Fund

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- Awards fellowships to at-risk Scholars. They are 1 to 2 years long. SRF provides up to \$25 000 a year, and requires a matching donation from the host institution.
- So far, 1,968 awards have been granted to 1,174 scholars.
- List of endangered scholars supported by SRF (currently 3 entries from Cameroon, Iran, Sudan):  
<https://www.scholarrescuefund.org/hosts-partners/fellows-seeking-placement/>
- To participate, an institution can join the IIE-SRF alliance by visiting  
<https://www.scholarrescuefund.org/>

# Scholars at Risk

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- List of endangered scholars seeking a short term position (currently 39 entries from Afghanistan, Belarus, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iran, Myanmar, Pakistan, Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Türkiye, Ukraine, Yemen):

<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/actions/host-a-scholar/>

- Free to Think: yearly report by the Academic Freedom Monitoring Project:

<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/resources/free-to-think-2025/>

- Institutions can join the SAR network by visiting

<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/>

## Local initiatives

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- UK: [Council for At-Risk Academics](#) (CARA).
- Germany: [Philip Schwartz Initiative](#) of the [Alexander von Humboldt Foundation](#).
- France: [Programme national d'Accueil en Urgence des Scientifiques en Exil](#) (PAUSE). (Website is outdated.)

## Committee of concerned scientists

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- Advocacy group for the protection of the human rights of scholars.
- Looking for new members (Council of Young Scholars)!

<https://concernedscientists.org>

- Scholar Rescue Fund: <https://scholarrescuefund.org>
- Council for At-Risk Academics: <https://cara.ngo>
- Schwartz: <https://www.humboldt-foundation.de>
- PAUSE:  
<https://www.campusfrance.org/en/pause-program-urgent-aid-scientists-exile>
- Scholars at Risk: <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org>
- Committee of Concerned Scientists: <https://concernedscientists.org>

