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Endangered Scholars Worldwide

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Endangered Scholars Worldwide

The information in this quarterly print report is current as of July 13, 2020. The situation of scholars and students around the world changes on a daily basis. For the most up-to-date information and ways in which you can be involved in calling for the freedom of endangered scholars and students, please visit us online at www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net or follow us at www.facebook.com/endangeredscholars. In these pages we introduce new cases that have come to our attention over the past three months and provide basic information about continuing cases—a description of charges and potential or actual reported sentences. If you are aware of a scholar or student whose case you believe we should investigate, please contact us at esw@newschool.edu.



SPECIAL REPORT

ESW Statement of Solidarity with the Black Lives Matter Movement

Endangered Scholars Worldwide (ESW) decries the discrimination and structural racism directed against the Black community. We believe that such injustice cannot stop until we all affirm that Black Lives Matter. Therefore, we stand in solidarity with those who are fighting against racial injustice and systematic racism that we have seen in the United States and elsewhere, and we stand with the Black community as a whole to demand justice for the systemic profiling, harassment, assault, incarceration and killing of Black people. ESW and the New University in Exile Consortium, of which we are now a part, lend our support to any movement for social justice. We believe that silence is complicity. With that in mind, Endangered Scholars Worldwide

supports the Black Lives Matter movement and all those who have fought tirelessly for Black lives long before now.

NEW AND CONTINUING CASES

BAHRAIN

Scholars and Researchers: Endangered Scholars Worldwide (ESW) joins other human rights organizations in calling on the Bahraini government, amid the global threat posed by COVID-19, to release all scholars and students imprisoned solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association. Though Bahrain released 1,486 prisoners on March 17, 2020, imprisoned scholars and students—many of whom are older and suffer from underlying medical conditions—were excluded from the decrees. Given the poor, unsanitary conditions in Bahrain’s prisons and the inadequate medical care, prisoners who are vulnerable to COVID-19, such as ABDUL-JALIL AL-SINGACE, 57, former head of the Department of Engineering at the University of Bahrain, should be allowed early release or parole.

Since 2011, Al-Singace has been in Jau Prison—Bahrain’s largest prison, where the lack of adequate sanitation led to a scabies outbreak in December 2011—on a life sentence for allegedly “plotting to overthrow the government” during the Arab Spring protests. He has been subjected to torture and various other forms of mistreatment. Bahraini officials have consistently ignored Al-Singace’s requests for medical attention despite his long-term poliomyelitis, which has left him paralyzed since childhood.

Students: On June 27 2020, the government of Bahrain executed ALI MOHAMED HAKEEM AL-ARAB, 25, a nursing student, who was arrested on February 9, 2017, with his cousin, AHMED AL-ARAB, 28, who is also a nursing student. Both men were sentenced to death by the Fourth High Criminal Court in Bahrain on charges including “forming and joining a ‘terrorist group’.” Ali Al-Arab, along with several other pris-

oners, escaped from Jau Prison on January 1, 2017, resulting in the death of a policeman. The Bahrain Ministry of Interior issued a statement in February identifying Ali Al-Arab as “the main suspect” in the police officer’s death, after he was “found to be in possession of two Kalashnikov rifles and three firearms.” According to a report by Amnesty International dated March 15, 2018, security officers tortured and mistreated the two men to force them to sign a confession. On May 6, 2019, the Court of Cassation upheld the two men’s convictions and death sentences. The two remain at risk of further torture and mistreatment. The death sentences will now go to the king for ratification. ESW condemns in the strongest possible terms the execution of these men, which is a violation of international law and defies the public outcry from UN experts, human rights organizations, and officials from multiple governments. ESW calls on the Government of Bahrain to immediately halt any pending executions, and to retry other individuals on death row who have been coerced to confess through torture and other fair trial rights violations.

As we have reported repeatedly, Bahraini authorities, whether deliberately or through indifference, are wielding the denial of adequate medical care as a weapon against their dissidents, both academic and other. ESW urges the authorities to grant Abdul-Jalil Al-Singace, Ahmed Al-Arab, and all other prisoners access to all necessary medical care as a matter of urgency. We urge the authorities to ensure that those who remain in prison have access to disease prevention and treatment services, including ensuring physical distancing of prisoners at all times.

Five other students, JAWAD AL-MAHARY, SHAWQI RADHI, JASSIM AL-HULAINI, JASSIM AL-MUKHODHER, and YOUSIF AHMED, were sentenced to 15 years in prison at a trial on March 5, 2012, for their involvement in prodemocracy demonstrations. According to information received by ESW, AHMED AUON lost his right eye when he was struck by a metal pellet fired from a police shotgun following the demonstration. The

authorities at Dry Dock Detention Center, where Auon is being held, have denied him proper medical treatment.

ESW is deeply concerned about the continuous mistreatment of scholars and students in Bahrain. We call on the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Nations, the European Union, and other international institutions to put pressure on Bahraini authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Al-Arab and all other detainees held on politically motivated charges due to the ongoing popular movement for freedom and democracy.

Please send appeals to the following:

Sheikh Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa
Office of the King
The Amiri Court
PO Box 555
Rifa'a Palace
Al-Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 176 64 587
Website: <http://www.mofa.gov.bh/>

Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al-Khalifa
Deputy Prime Minister
Diplomatic Area
PO Box # 450
Al-Manama
Kingdom of Bahrain
Fax: +973 175 13 333

BANGLADESH

On Monday, October 7, 2019, ABRAR FAHAD, a second-year-student of electrical and electronic engineering at Dhaka's Bangladesh University of Engineering (Buet), was beaten to death in his university's dormitory just days after criticizing the government on Facebook. Several members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL)—the youth wing of the governing Awami League party—were detained in connection with the death.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide condemns this attack in the strongest possible terms. In recent years there has been a rise in extremist violence in Bangladesh, including a series of assassinations of bloggers and intellectuals who have criticized militant Islam. Students, professors, and academics have been increasingly targeted in violent attacks—an unacceptable trend that hurts the future of societies at large. Universities, as all-in-one symbols of freedom, empowerment,

and peace, are increasingly targeted for the values they promote, which stand in strong contrast with the extremist ideology and ruthless methods of terrorist groups.

Please send appeals to the following:

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin

Embassy of Bangladesh

3510 International Drive NW

Washington, DC 20008

USA

Tel: +1 202 244 2745

BRAZIL

On June 18, 2020, Endangered Scholars Worldwide learned that Jair Bolsonaro's attempt to intervene in the appointment of university deans was rejected by the Brazilian Congress. While we are relieved to hear this, we must remember that this trend will be in place for the foreseeable future. This is not the first time that Bolsonaro's administration has attacked the independence of higher education institutions. As we reported, in 2019, Education Minister Abraham Weintraub accused the universities of making a "mess," which is why the government is slashing university funding by 30 percent—a move said to be motivated by complaints about partisan activities on campuses.

To imagine the most recent government intervention as an isolated act is a mistake. This is part of a project to repress academic freedom in Brazil. Committed to science, the university has become an enemy of the president. The attempted intervention was a pretext for the imposition of far-right ideologies in Brazil's higher education. That is why we stand in solidarity with the students and faculty of Brazilian universities and join academic, intellectual, and political leaders in Brazil and other regions to decry attacks on the country's universities which are committed in the name of Bolsonaro's wider aggressive, anti-progressive, and fascistic agenda. We call upon all European governments, the US Department of State, international organizations, university presidents, academic and professional associations, student groups, and individuals devoted to the promotion and defense of human rights to protest and condemn these populist attacks on the pillars of Brazil's democracy and education system.

Please send appeals to the following:

Michael R. Pompeo
United States Secretary of State
Office of Foreign Missions
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520 USA
Email: OFMInfo@state.gov

Todd C. Chapman
Ambassador of the United States to Brazil
Embassy of the United States to Brazil
Rua Henri Dunant
500 Chácara Santo Antônio
São Paulo- SP, 04709-110
Brazil
Fax: +55 11 5181 8730

CHINA

Scholars and Researchers: The repression of Uyghurs, the Chinese Muslim minority, in Xinjiang, whatever Beijing may say, is a reality. According to a report published by the French daily newspaper *L'Humanité* in December 2019, the Chinese authorities would imminently carry out the execution of TASHPOLAT TIYIP, a prominent Uyghur academic, member of the Chinese Communist Party, renowned scholar of geography, and former president of Xinjiang University (XJU). Tiyip was kidnapped in 2017, arbitrarily detained, and sentenced to death in a secret and grossly unfair trial for “ethnic separatism.” On March 2017, while he was in detention, XJU announced that Tiyip had been removed from his position as president. According to the reports published by Amnesty International, Tiyip had been detained at Beijing airport en route to Germany for a conference. No information has been made available about charges and proceedings against him, and his current whereabouts remain unknown. ESW calls on the Chinese authorities to immediately halt plans to carry out the execution of Tashpolat Tiyip and release him unconditionally.

Tiyip is not the only Uyghur academic incarcerated in northwest China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR), where an estimated 1.5 million Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities accused of harboring “strong religious views” and “politically incorrect” ideas are being held in “re-education” camps, which China claims are an effective tool to protect the country from terrorism and provide voca-

tional training. According to a report released by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (UHRP) on December 15, 2019, the Chinese government has interned, imprisoned, or forcibly disappeared more than 400 intellectuals, among them “an alarming 77 university professors” and more than 100 students, as part of its intensified assault on Uyghurs and the extermination of their culture in East Turkestan. By the date of this report, five deaths in custody had been confirmed, but the true number of intellectuals who have died in the camps or immediately after release is unknown due to the veil of secrecy and fear. Dozens of intellectuals are also serving harsh sentences handed down prior to April 2017.

From Xinjiang University alone, 21 people have been incarcerated in the “re-education camps” which the Chinese government describes as having been set up for “vocational training” exercises. The report notes that faculty from the university “have been a focus for the Chinese authorities given their prominence in Uyghur-produced scholarship conducted in the region.”

In a previous report released in January, UHRP gave details on some of those who had disappeared, including RAHILE DAWUT, a leading expert on Uyghur folklore and traditions at Xinjiang University whose work had previously been sponsored by the Chinese State. She left Urumchi for Beijing in December 2017 and has not been heard from since.

The names of Kashgar University’s president, ERKIN OMER; its vice president, MUHTER ABDUGHOPUR; and professors QURBAN OSMAN and GULNAR OBUL have been deleted from the institution’s website, and their whereabouts are unknown. HALMURAT GHOPUR, the president of the Xinjiang Food and Drug Administration’s Department of Inspection and Supervision and former president of the Xinjiang Medical University Hospital, has been detained in an undisclosed location since November 2017.

ABDULQADIR JALAEDDIN, a professor, philosopher, and poet at Xinjiang Normal University, was also reported among those detained and disappeared by UHRP.

According to a report by RFA's Uyghur Service published on May 20, 2019, detainees in "re-education camps" are given an hour or so to "cry" every two weeks, according to a young ethnic Kazakh woman who was held at one of the facilities.

On December 17, 2019, jailed Uyghur scholar, ILHAM TOHTI, who has been in prison on a life sentence since September 23, 2014, received the 2019 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in absentia in Strasbourg, France. An outspoken economics professor who regularly highlighted the religious and cultural persecution of the Uyghurs, Tohti, 49, was arrested on charges of promoting separatism. ESW is particularly concerned by reports that his wife and children have not been allowed to visit him at all since 2018. In a January 17, 2018 statement, Reporters Without Borders described Tohti's situation as, "typical of the massive human rights violations taking place under [Chinese] President Xi Jinping." The detention and imprisonment of such an important intellectual and cultural leader and voice of moderation should be seen as a major part of China's grave repression of the Uyghurs.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide deplores the Chinese government's pervasive and ongoing crackdown on the Uyghur people. We believe the internment of more than a million and a half Uyghurs is one of the most serious human rights violations in the world today. We urge the Chinese authorities to stop harassing the Uyghur population immediately, and we call on the Chinese government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights as specified in international conventions and treaties, in accordance with China's obligations under international law.

Students who remain in prison on charges of "separatism" and their connection to Ilham Tohti are PERHAT HALMURAT, SHOHRET NIJAT, LUO YUWEI, MUTELLIP IMIN, ABDUQEYUM ABLIMIT, ATIKEN ROZI, and AKBAR IMIN.

Please send appeals to the following:

Xi Jinping
President of the People's Republic of
China
Zhong Nhai
Beijing 100032
People's Republic of China

Zhou Qiang
Chief Justice, Supreme People's Court
No. 27 Dong Jiao Min Xiang
Beijing 100745
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86 10 6529 2345 (c/o Ministry of
Communication)
Website: www.court.gov.cn

EGYPT

On June 9, 2020, Endangered Scholars Worldwide learned that for the sixth time, an Egyptian Court renewed the detention of the University of Bologna researcher and student PATRICK GEORGE ZAKI for an additional 15 years. Zaki has been in custody since February 7, 2020, and has been allegedly tortured and mistreated by Egyptian authorities. Zaki's arrest has alarmed many in Italy, where the researcher was pursuing a Master's degree in gender and women's studies at the University of Bologna. There are fears that this may be a repeat of the case of the murdered Italian doctoral student Giulio Regeni, whose body was found with extensive signs of torture on a roadside on the outskirts of Cairo in 2016.

Zaki, who was allegedly involved with social activism many years ago, was arrested as part of Egypt's ongoing crackdown on dissent. He is accused of calling for protests against the government and for the "spread of fake news." His lawyers requested his release on grounds of procedural irregularities and lack of evidence because he has a verified address and would be unable to tamper with case evidence, if there was any. They have said that he was beaten, subjected to electric shocks, threatened, and questioned about his work and activism before he appeared at a public prosecutor's office in his hometown of Mansoura on Saturday, a day after his detention in the Egyptian capital.

Rights activists say Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has overseen an unprecedented crackdown on freedom—including banning all unauthorized demonstrations—since first taking power in

2013 and then winning the election in 2014. Recent laws in Egypt have expanded the definition of “terrorism” to include all political dissent, granting prosecutors broad power to keep people detained for months and even years without ever filing charges or presenting evidence.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide considers the detention of Patrick George Zaki a flagrant and unjust violation of the freedom, security, and safety of a scholars and students in Egypt and strongly deplores and condemns his ongoing detention and persecution. We call upon all international organizations, academic and professional associations, and other groups and individuals devoted to the promotion and defense of human rights to protest and condemn this arbitrary incarceration; to call for his immediate and unconditional release; and to urge the officials of the Egyptian government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide is also deeply concerned about the arbitrary arrest and sentencing of five Cairo University academics in the aftermath of the September 2019 protests against the Egyptian government.

Professor HASAN NAFAA, a highly respected political scientist and commentator, was arrested and accused of publishing fake news and of incitement against the Egyptian state after writing a Facebook post critical of Egypt’s president and a recording was leaked in which he was asked to appear in a documentary produced in cooperation with Al-Jazeera.. He was sent to the State Security Court on September 26 and sentenced to 15 days in Tura prison for “participating in a terrorist group,” “spreading false news,” and using social media to spread rumors. According to the Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights, the public prosecutor levied additional charges against Nafaa on October 5, 2019, and on October 6, he was detained for an additional 15 days. As of this report, he remains in prison.

HAZEM HOSNI, a professor of economics and political science, was arrested on September 24, 2019, and later sentenced to 15 days in

prison for “participating in a terrorist group,” “spreading false news,” and using social media to spread rumors. In addition, he has been accused of “using his personal online profile to publish rumors which endanger public safety, spread terror among the population, and harm the public interest.” Like Nafaa, Hosni also had written a Facebook post criticizing President Sisi’s regime in the days immediately preceding his arrest. Professor Hosni has actively participated in electoral politics, serving as the spokesperson for the presidential campaign of former Egyptian military chief of staff Sami Anan, who was imprisoned two months before the March 2018 presidential elections and remains in custody.

Another Cairo University professor active in electoral politics, professor of urban planning MAGDI KERQAR, has also been arrested. At least 19 other leaders and members of the party were arrested around the same time as Kerqar. Finally, AHMAD HELMY HAMDUN, a teaching assistant in the department of economics and political science, was arrested on September 26, 2019, while sitting with his brother, Mohamed Helmy Hamdun, and his sister-in-law, Asmaa Dabees, a well-known feminist and founder of the group “Daughter of the Nile,” in a cafe in Damanhour. They were taken forcibly into a van outside the cafe by men in civilian clothing and remained incommunicado with their whereabouts unknown for five days. On October 1, all three of them were sentenced to 15 days in jail. As of this report, they remain in prison.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide deplores and condemns the detention of Hasan Nafaa, Hazem Hosni, Magdi Kerqar, and Ahmad Helmy Hamdun, and calls upon all international organizations, academic and professional associations, and other groups and individuals devoted to the promotion and defense of human rights to protest and condemn these arbitrary incarcerations and to call for the academics’ immediate release and the dropping of all charges against them.

Please send appeals to the following:

Ambassador Yasser Reda
Egyptian Embassy to the United States
3521 International Ct. NW
Washington DC 20008
USA
Email: contact@egyptembassy.net
Website: <http://www.egyptembassy.net>

Ambassador Mohamed Fathi Ahmed
Edrees
Egyptian Permanent Representative to the
United Nations
United Nations
800 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017
USA

ETHIOPIA

According to a report published by Ethiopia's Ministry of Science and Higher Education, protests and unrest have led 35,000 students to stop attending classes at 22 universities for reasons of safety, due to ethnic clashes on campuses. The ministry stated that it has taken various disciplinary measures against hundreds of university staff and students who are suspected of involvement in unrest. "The ministry has also formed a committee to prevent the recurrence of unrest in Ethiopian universities, as well as facilitate the return of 35,000 university students back to their studies."

Ethnic clashes at various Ethiopian universities since last November have killed more than ten students and left many others injured. The clashes have prompted Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed to warn that his government could close down universities if the unrest continues. In recent years, Ethiopia's higher education institutions have become scenes of violence between students over ethnic and religious differences. Students, professors, and academics have been increasingly targeted in violent attacks—an unacceptable trend. Universities, as symbols of freedom, empowerment, and peace are attacked for the values they promote, values that stand in strong contrast with the extremist ideology now dominant in Ethiopia.

We firmly believe that ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia have a chilling effect on the freedom of speech and academic freedom that all educational institutions should uphold. We urge the Ethiopian government to stand against ethnic clashes on campus protect all students' right to academic freedom.

Please send appeals to the following:

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali
Office of the Prime Minister
P.O. Box 1031
Addis Ababa
Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
Email: info@pmo.gov.et
Fax: 251 111 226 292

Mr. Getachew Ambaye
Ministry of Justice
P.O. Box 1370
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Fax: +251 11 5517775 / 5520874
Email: ministry-justice@telecom.net.et

IRAN

Scholars and Researchers: Iran, one of the countries most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, has temporarily released around 85,000 prisoners due to the fear of the novel coronavirus. However, foreign and dual-national academics remain incarcerated. Political prisoners and foreign academics such as the British-Australian academic KYLIE MOORE-GILBERT have also been excluded from the furloughing of prisoners.

On May 16, 2020, Iran's judiciary handed French-Iranian academic FARIBA ADELKHAH a five-year term for conspiring against national security and one year for propaganda, her lawyer Saeid Dehghan said. Adelkhah, 61, is a director of research at Sciences Po's Centre for International Studies (CERI). She is a well-known anthropologist and researcher on Iran and Shiite Islam. She was detained in June 2019 along with her French colleague ROLAND MARCHAL. On March 21, 2020, Iran freed Roland Marchal after a prisoner swap with France. Prior to her arrest, Adelkhah had traveled frequently between the two countries and had spent nearly a year in Iran where her family lives, friend and fellow academic Jean-Francois Bayart told AFP. According to Banegas, Marchal and Adelkhah were in a romantic relationship. Both scholars have been accused of "propaganda against the system" and "colluding to commit acts against national security."

Letters smuggled out of Evin prison reveal that KYLIE MOORE-GILBERT is despairing at her isolation inside prison, believing she has been abandoned to her decade-long sentence. Moore-Gilbert, a University of Melbourne lecturer and researcher specializing in Middle East politics,

has spent more than 600 days in prison. She was detained in August 2018 by the Islamic Republic of Iran and sentenced to 10 years for undisclosed reasons. She is currently being held in Ward 2A, an isolated Revolutionary Guard-run wing of Tehran's notorious Evin prison. Reports suggest that the Australian embassy in Tehran is maintaining some contact with Moore-Gilbert. Australia's ambassador Lyndall Sachs last spoke to her on April 21, 2020. Moore-Gilbert was also able to speak with her father in March.

We at Endangered Scholars Worldwide consider Kylie Moore-Gilbert's detention a flagrant and unjust violation of the freedom, security, and safety. She has been caught up in the political tension between the United Kingdom and Iran—arrested without cause, held for weeks in solitary confinement and without access to a lawyer, and subjected to physical mistreatment and psychological abuse.

In addition, AHMADREZA DJALALI, 45, a professor, physician, and researcher affiliated with the Karolinska Institute near Stockholm who focused on crisis management, was arrested in April 2016 on charges of "collaboration with a hostile government" while visiting his family in Tehran. Djalali was later accused of providing information to Israel to aid in the assassination of several senior nuclear scientists and, following a closed trial, was sentenced to death on October 20, 2017. The Iranian government has disclosed no evidentiary basis for the allegations, which Djalali has denied, declaring that his ties to the international academic community are the real reasons for his incarceration. Recent reports and interviews with Djalali's wife indicate that his health has deteriorated in prison; he has, for example, lost over 25 kilograms (approximately 55 pounds). Despite Djalali's poor health, however, his medical furlough request has been repeatedly denied. In December 2018, 124 Nobel Laureates sent a joint letter to the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, requesting him to intervene personally in this case and to assure Djalali receives a fair trial and subsequent exoneration and release.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide deplores and condemns the ongoing detention, persecution, conviction, and mistreatment of dual nationals in response to their exercise of the rights to academic freedom, free expression, and free association, and calls upon all international organizations, academic and professional associations, and other groups and individuals devoted to the promotion and defense of human rights to strongly protest and condemn the arbitrary incarcerations; to ask for her immediate and unconditional release; and to urge the officials of the Iranian government to end the tactic of taking of foreign nationals and dual citizen scholars and students hostage for political gains and to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights.

Students who remain in prison in Iran include ARASH SADEGHI, 33, a student rights activist sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in September 2009 on charges of "collusion against the regime" and "insulting the Supreme Leader of Iran." Sadeghi was arrested on September 6, 2014, at his stationery store in Tehran by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps' intelligence organization. In June 2018, Sadeghi underwent a biopsy and was diagnosed with chondrosarcoma, a rare form of cancer that causes bone tumors. "After the biopsy, the assigned doctor prescribed monthly hospital visits to check his tumor and stop its growth." According to a report published on April 2019 by the Center for Human Rights in Iran (CHRI), Sadeghi has lost the ability to move his right arm due to an infection in his shoulder that was left untreated. In July 2019, the UN listed Sadeghi as prisoners in Iran who have been repeatedly denied adequate medical treatment. "The critical condition of human rights defender Arash Sadeghi, who has reportedly been diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer, is particularly alarming," UN experts said in a statement. On April 10, 2020, ESW learned that the Sadeghi's condition has worsened, and he is in an immediate risk of losing his arm.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide urges the Iranian authorities to release all students behind bars arrested for their peaceful activities. ESW calls on the Iranian president, Hassan Rouhani, to defend students' right to freedom of expression.

Please send appeals to the following:

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
The Office of the Supreme Leader
Jomhuri Street
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 644 11
Website: <http://www.leader.ir/langs/en/>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/www.Khamenei.ir>

Javad Zarif
Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Minister's Office
Imam Khomeini Square
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran
Fax: +98 21 66743149
Website: <http://www.mfa.gov.ir>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/jzarif>

President Hassan Rouhani
The Office of the President
Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

PAKISTAN

On June 28, 2020, Endangered Scholars Worldwide learned that a Pakistani literature professor has been detained under Pakistan's controversial blasphemy laws—yet another example of growing religious intolerance in the Muslim-majority country. SAJID SOOMRO, a senior professor of Sindhi literature at Khairpur's Shah Abdul Latif University in Sindh province, was arrested on June 10, 2020, after police filed a blasphemy case against him under the Pakistan Penal Code, a law that carries a potential death sentence for anyone who insults Islam. Soomro has since been incarcerated and is awaiting trial, and reports suggest that he is in solitary confinement. The police have stated that Soomro has been on their radar for his dissenting views and criticisms of the country's most powerful clerics, as he had spoken out repeatedly about the growing number of insurgents and extremist seminaries over

the last 15 years, blaming the central government for the rise of violent extremism in Pakistan.

Academic freedom has always been under threat in Pakistan. What is concerning now is that blasphemy-related violence against lecturers, professors, researchers, and students fostered in part by government persecution and discriminatory laws is becoming more frequent, and authorities have failed to establish adequate protection for universities. As we reported, in December 2019, a 33-year-old university lecturer, **JUNAID HAFEEZ**, was sentenced to death on blasphemy charges. The Bahauddin Zakariya University lecturer was accused by hardline student groups of insulting the Prophet Muhammad on social media and of making derogatory remarks in March 2013. Hafeez was sentenced behind bars without trial for six years, spending much of that time in solitary confinement. His lawyer, Rashid Rehman, was shot dead in his office in the city of Multan in May 2014.

The penalty for blasphemy under Pakistani law is death. But it is increasingly common that vigilantes take the law into their own hands before the courts get involved. Since 1990, at least 65 people have been murdered by angry mobs or assassinated on allegations of insulting Islam. In April 2017, **MASHAL KHAN**, 23, a student at Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan, a town in Northwest Pakistan, was pulled from his dorm room by a crowd of his fellow students. The violence that followed, recorded on a mobile phone, was uncommonly brutal. The video shows the mob involved in the lynching shouting religious slogans and congratulating each other over the terrible episode.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide is deeply alarmed by the recurring wave of vicious campaigns against academics in Pakistan. We deplore all attempts to limit academic freedom by targeting intellectuals on insubstantial grounds. We believe that the ongoing, increasingly severe attacks against university students and faculty in Pakistan bring up grave concerns over the ability of scholars, intellectuals, students to work safely in the country's educational settings.

Please send appeals to the following:

Raja Ali Ejaz

Consulate General of Pakistan

12 East 65th Street

New York NY 10065

Phone: +1 212 879 5800

Fax: +1 212 517 6987

Email: info@pakistanconsulateny.org

SAUDI ARABIA

Scholars and Researchers: The trial of five Saudi human rights activists has been delayed due to the court's closure because of the coronavirus. In January 2020, Endangered Scholars Worldwide learned that the authorities in Saudi Arabia arrested about a dozen intellectuals and activists and have increased their tactics of "intimidation" and "torture" against other detainees, as reported by the Saudi Human Rights group ALQST. According to the London-based organization, on November 16, the writers BADER AL RASHED, SULAIMAN AL SAIJAN AL NASER, UAAD AL MUHAYA, and MUSAB FUAD were arrested in the capital. According to the same report, the health of FAHAD AL-QAHTANI, a prominent Saudi economist who has been in jail since 2011, is deteriorating due to conditions in the Al-Ha'ir criminal prison in Riyadh. According to The Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), Al-Qahtani was transferred from his cell in the prison to a new wing on March 20, 2019. Al-Qahtani was awarded the 2018 Right Livelihood Award with Abdullah Al-Hamid and Waleed Abu Al-Khair, who are also in prison in Saudi Arabia. He and Al-Hamid cofounded the Association for Civil Rights and Political Rights (ACPRA).

Endangered Scholars Worldwide joins GCHR and other like-minded human rights organizations to call on the Saudi government to end the imprisonment and mistreatment of Al-Qahtani and other human rights defenders on account of their peaceful work. In March 2016, ALI ABDULLAH AL-HAJI, a professor at King Saud University in Riyadh, was arrested along with 31 others on charges of spying for Iran. According to Saudi news outlets, Al-Haji was sentenced to five years of imprisonment. Others accused include a student at Imam Muhammad Bin Saud Islamic University and an academician who held the job of "development researcher" at the Ministry of Education for more than

25 years. Endangered Scholars Worldwide has still been unable to obtain the names of the latter two defendants.

Scholars and researchers who remain in prison include ABDUL KAREEM YOUSEF AL-KHODER, a professor of comparative jurisprudence at Qassim University who was sentenced in June 2013 to 8 years' imprisonment and a 10-year travel ban, though the case was later overturned. Authorities later retried Al-Khoder in the Specialized Criminal Court on the same charges, and in October 2015 sentenced him to 10 years in prison and a 10-year ban on foreign travel. Another imprisoned scholar is SA'UD MUKHTAR AL-HASHIMI, a faculty member at the King Abdulaziz University who was sentenced in November 2011 to 30 years in prison.

Please send appeals to the following:

Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud
Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs
Nasseriya Street
Riyadh 11124
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Fax: +966 1 403 0645

Walid bin Mohammed bin Saleh
Al-Samaani
Minister of Justice
PO Box 58889, Bldg. 373
King Fahad Road
Riyadh 11515
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
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THAILAND

Scholars and Researchers: On August 21, 2017, CHAYAN VADDHANAPHUTI, director of the Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development at Chiang Mai University, who organized the thirteenth International Conference on Thai Studies along with four other Thai academics, was charged with violating the country's military junta's ban on political gatherings of more than five people. Also charged were four delegates at the conference, PAKAWADEE VEERAPATPONG, CHAIPONG SAMNIENG, NONTAWAT MACHAI, and THIRAMON BUA-NGAM, all of whom committed the same offense: holding posters reading, "An academic forum is not a military barrack," to protest the military's surveillance of participants during the conference. On December 25, 2018, the Chiang Mai District Court threw out the lawsuit against five academ-

ics, who were charged by violating the military ordered restrictions over the Thai citizens' right to associate and freedom of expression. The dismissal of the court case was based on National Council for Peace and Order's (NCPO) decision of revoking the restrictions over political gatherings.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide believes that the lese majeste law is being used in Thailand to silence academics, students, and political dissidents. The military regime that took power in 2014 has cracked down primarily on Internet commentary. According to iLaw, a group that tracks royal defamation cases, 82 people have been charged under the lese majeste law since the coup three years ago. Despite the recent lifting of the ban on political gatherings in 2019, other restrictions of academic freedom remained in effect, as evidence has also demonstrated increasing harassment of international academics studying the country's politics, society, and culture. According to a February 9, 2019, tweet from anthropologist Andrew Johnson from Princeton University, he was detained in 2019 by the Thai immigration police, who informed Johnson that he was one of 30 names on a government watchlist of academics and researchers.

ESW urges the officials of the Thai government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights as specified in international conventions and treaties and to drop any charges against the accused arising from the nonviolent exercise of the rights to expression, association, and assembly.

Please send appeals to the following:

Ambassador Vitavas Srivihok
Permanent Mission of Thailand to the
United Nations
351 East 52nd Street
New York NY 10022

Fax 212-688-3029
Thailand@un.int
Website: [http://www.thaiembassy.org/
unmissionnewyork/](http://www.thaiembassy.org/unmissionnewyork/)

TURKEY

Scholars, researchers, and students: On July 26, 2019, Turkey's Constitutional Court held a meeting to examine individual applications for judicial review from 10 academics who had been sentenced to between 15 months and 3 years in prison for having signed Academics for Peace petition, including ZUBEYDE FUSUN USTEL, who has been imprisoned since May 8, 2019. The high court has ruled that the trial of the Academics for Peace based on charges of terrorist propaganda as per the Anti-Terror Law was a violation of their freedom of expression, and it overturned the lower courts' rulings with a request for retrial. Since the announcement of the high court's landmark decision, 722 Peace Academics have been acquitted of terrorism charges. However, despite the acquittal of charges, none of the academics have been compensated for the psychological and physical damage they endured, nor have they been reinstated to their jobs.

In addition, as this issue goes to press, 6,021 academics, including those who have been acquitted of terrorism charges, have lost their jobs and passports in an effort to prevent them from leaving the country to seek jobs abroad. Although the Constitutional Court's decision implied the removal of restrictions including the travel ban and the reinstatement of their freedom of movement, COVID19-related contingencies have noticeably slowed the daily conduct of bureaucracy, and as a result, most academics are still waiting for the return of their passports. Among them is TUNA ALTINEL, professor of mathematics at Lyon-1 University in France, whose trial resulted with acquittal of all charges in January 2020. Nevertheless, as of July 2020, his passport has not been reauthorized, and he is forcibly stranded in Turkey.

While fighting for the reinstatement of their rights and freedoms, Peace scholars have established solidarity and street academies in a number of cities in Turkey to bring dismissed scholars together and to create an environment for them and their students to connect and produce knowledge, similar to transnational academic solidarity initiatives joined by those in exile. In June 2020, in collaboration with the

European Endowment for Democracy and Civil Rights Defenders, these local initiatives launched a new platform. Called BİRARADA Academy, it brings together the street academies, local academic solidarity initiatives, and international human rights and academic freedom solidarity networks with the purpose of rethinking, restructuring, and reproducing academia beyond institutionalized higher education.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide welcomes this news with great relief. ESW has been monitoring the struggle of academics in Turkey since the attempted coup in 2016, making inquiries on a daily basis. The ongoing tensions in Turkey have had a profoundly unsettling effect on academic freedom and continue to pose a grave threat to higher education on a national scale. We at ESW consider the Constitutional Court's 2019 decision a significant development and hope to share the news of the exoneration and reinstatement of those who were dismissed from their positions due to peaceful exercise of their freedom of expression and association, conduct that is expressly protected under international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both to which Turkey is party.

For full coverage of the crisis in higher education in Turkey and to sign our letter of protest, please visit <https://tinyurl.com/turkey-esw>.

Please send appeals to the following:

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan
The Office of the President
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi
06560 Beştepe, Ankara
Turkey
Fax: +90 312 525 58 31

Abdülhamit Gül
Minister of Justice
06669 Kızılay, Ankara
Turkey
Fax: +90 312 419 3370
Email: info@adalet.gov.tr

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

ESW is relieved that on Thursday, June 18, 2020, the US Supreme Court ruled that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) was illegally rescinded by the Trump Administration. The court rejected the administration's effort to end legal protections for 700,000 young undocumented immigrants. The justices voted 5-4 to reject the Trump administration's arguments that the 8-year-old Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program is illegal and that courts have no role to play in reviewing the decision to end DACA.

On April 10, 2020, Endangered Scholars Worldwide reported that the recipients of DACA were not eligible for emergency aid the US Congress set aside in its stimulus package to help students who have experienced disruptions due to the closure of campuses during the coronavirus epidemic. As the majority of DACA recipients are students enrolled in higher education institutions, this egregious decision directly affected them and made it even more difficult for these students to get the money they so clearly need it.

We at Endangered Scholars Worldwide welcome the Supreme Court decision and believe that any form of discrimination against DACA recipients impedes the mission of higher learning institutions to provide safe environments in which everyone is respected and teaching and learning are fostered.

Please send appeals to the following:

William Barr

Attorney General

U.S. Department of Justice

950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20530-0001

Tell: +1 202 514 2000

Website: <http://www.justice.gov/ag>

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Scholar: According to a report dated December 10, 2019 by the *Washington Post*, the Emirati professor and economist NASSER BIN GHAITH's health is severely deteriorating. He is now unable to walk without assistance. The economist, who taught at the Abu Dhabi branch of Paris-Sorbonne University, is serving a 10-year sentence handed down in March 2017

for tweets critical of UAE authorities. During his trial, the Emirati authorities restricted his access to his lawyer, and he was unable to prepare a proper defense. Bin Ghaith is being held at the Al-Razeen maximum security prison in Abu Dhabi, which is home to a number of Emirati dissidents and where he claims to have experienced torture at the hands of officials.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide condemns the ongoing detention, persecution, and conviction of Nasser bin Ghaith and asks all international organizations, academic and professional associations, and other groups and individuals devoted to the promotion and defense of human rights to protest this arbitrary incarceration; to call for bin Ghaith's immediate and unconditional release; and to urge the officials of the UAE government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights as specified in international conventions and treaties.

Please send appeals to the following:

Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al
Maktoum
Prime Minister's Office
PO Box: 212000
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Fax: +971 4 330 404
info@primeminister.ae

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Al Bateen, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al
Saud Street
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Fax +971 02 444 7766
info@mofa.gov.ae

Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan
Minister of Interior
Zayed Sport City, Arab Gulf Street, Near to
Shaikh Zayed Mosque
PO Box: 398
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
Fax: +971 2 402 2762 / +971 2 441 5780
moi@moi.gov.ae

VIETNAM

Scholar: On November 15, 2019, Endangered Scholars Worldwide learned that Vietnamese University lecturer PHAM XUAN HAO, 54, was sentenced to 12 months in prison for “abusing democratic rights and freedoms to infringe upon state interests.” Hao is an internationally renowned scholar and has spent most of his life working as a lecturer at the Technology Faculty of the University of Can Tho, one of the major universities in southern Vietnam. According to the 88 Project, during the trial, the prosecutors argued that Hao used Facebook to “publish pessimistic information about Vietnam that negatively affects netizens and the public.” The judges also asserted that he has tried to libel the policies of the Party and the State.

On November 15, 2019, NGUYEN NANG TINH, music lecturer at a provincial arts and culture college in Nghe An (north-central Vietnam) was sentenced to 11 years in prison and five years under house arrest on charges of “making, storing, disseminating or propagandizing information, materials and products that aim to oppose the State of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam” under article 117 of the country’s penal code. On April 2020, an appeals court in Nghe An upheld the original verdict and sentence. As he was waiting for his appeal trial, Tinh demanded to see a priest in prison; in response to the denial of his request by the prison administration, he went into a 46-day long hunger strike from March 3 to April 17, 2020.

From late 2019 to July 2020 at least 150 people were convicted for exercising their rights to freedom of expression or association and are currently in prison. At least 15 others have been charged but not yet put on trial.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide deplores and condemns the detention of XUAN HAO and NGUYEN NANG TINH, and calls upon all international organizations, academic and professional associations, and other groups and individuals devoted to the promotion and defense of human rights to protest this arbitrary incarceration; call for Hao and Tinh’s immediate and unconditional release; and urge the officials of

the Vietnamese government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights.

A *student* who remains in prison is DINH NGUYEN KHA, sentenced to eight years' imprisonment on charges of "conducting propaganda against the state" in May 2013. He was arrested in October 2012 for handing out leaflets critical of the government.

Please send appeals to the following:

Nguyễn Phú Trọng	Ba Đình District,
President of the Socialist Republic of	Hanoi,
Vietnam	Vietnam

SOURCES

Al Jazeera English. <http://www.aljazeera.com>

Amnesty International. <http://www.amnesty.org>

Asia News. <http://asianews.it>

Bahrain Center for Human Rights. <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en>

Bianet. <https://bianet.org/>

Birgun. <https://www.birgun.net/>

Committee of Concerned Scientists. <http://concernedscientists.org>

Council for Assisting Refugee Academics. <http://www.academic-refugees.org>

Endangered Scholars Worldwide. <http://www.endangeredscholar-worldwide.net>

English PEN. <http://www.englishpen.org/writersinprison>

Human Rights in China. <http://www.hrichina.org>

Human Rights Watch. <http://www.hrw.org>

Hurriyet. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr>

The International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran. <http://www.iranhumanrights.org>

Islamic Human Rights Commission. <http://www.ihrc.org>

L'Humanité. <https://www.humanite.fr/>

The New York Times. <http://www.nytimes.com>

Radio Free Europe. <http://www.rfa.org>

Scholars at Risk. <http://scholarsatrisk.nyu.edu>

Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center. <http://www.smhric.org>

UN Watch. <http://blog.unwatch.org>

—*Written by Ebby Abramson and Dolunay Bulut*