

# Endangered Scholars Worldwide

Attacks on higher education communities are occurring at an alarming rate worldwide, threatening the safety and well-being of scholars, students, and academic staff, as well as the autonomy of higher education institutions. In response to an increase in threats to academic freedom around the world, Endangered Scholars Worldwide is evolving as an online publication to provide more frequent, up-to-date alerts. With the global increase in internet access, sharing online updates has allowed us to respond more rapidly to new and developing cases and to make the information visible and accessible to readers in the most remote parts of the world.



While we will still publish a regular update in *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, going forward our activity will continue under the auspices of the New University in Exile Consortium, [www.newuniversityinexileconsortium.org](http://www.newuniversityinexileconsortium.org). Initially an outgrowth of ESW, the Consortium was launched as an independent initiative in 2018 and is based at The New School. The mission of the Consortium is to create a supportive intellectual community for threatened, exiled scholars.

For the most current information and ways in which you can be involved in our efforts to defend academic freedom and free expression, we invite you to visit our website [www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net](http://www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net) or follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/endangeredscholars> and <https://twitter.com/ESWNEWSCHOOL>.

If you are aware of a scholar or student whose case you believe we should investigate, please get in touch with us at [esw@newschool.edu](mailto:esw@newschool.edu).


Thank you for your unwavering support.

## **SPECIAL DELIVERY**

Endangered Scholars Worldwide is deeply concerned about recent reports from Afghanistan regarding the plight of the academic community. As this issue goes to press, five months after the Taliban took control of the country, academics say they feel alienated and abandoned by the international community. Many scientists and scholars have left or are desperately trying to leave the country to continue their lives and careers in safety. Many foreign embassies are still closed in Afghanistan, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions, their chances of crossing the border to Iran or Pakistan and getting their travel papers are quite limited.

Public universities and other institutions of higher education officially remain open. However, since the Taliban has banned coeducation of male and female students, universities are still working out the practicalities of implementing segregated teaching. The government has placed representatives at public universities to oversee the transition. The faculty were ordered to keep a record of student attendance, although classes are not running. University staff members have not received their salaries since the summer 2021, and international funding for research projects has been put on hold following the Taliban takeover in August.

Researchers and scholars have been stripped of their funding and their institutional autonomy by the new government. Many have stated their continuing fear of persecution because of their international connections, ethnicity, religious/sectarian identity, or gender. Some academics have been threatened with death or retribution by the Taliban, while all female academics and students were sent home for an indefinite period, raising further concerns about the future of scientific research and academic freedom in the country. It has been reported that faculty members from minority ethnic groups are being fired and replaced with those of Pashtun ethnicity, the group to which many Taliban members belong. There have also been some reports concerning the kidnapping and killing of academics from minority ethnic groups.



ESW stands in solidarity with Afghan scholars and students in their struggles for freedom and safety. We call upon all international organizations and academic and professional associations devoted to the promotion and defense of academic freedom to join us in urging the Taliban leadership to make all efforts to honor their obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights treaties, including to ensure free and unhindered humanitarian access to people in need of assistance and protection, open borders for the safe movement of students, faculty, artists, human rights activists, and journalists; and to honor the right to education and free expression.

Visit [www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net](http://www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net) for more information.

—*Written by Dolunay Bulut*