



PROJECT MUSE®

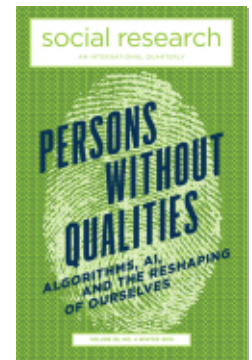
---

## Endangered Scholars Worldwide

Ebby Abramson, Dolunay Bulut

Social Research: An International Quarterly, Volume 86, Number 4, Winter 2019, pp. v-xxix (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/748869>

# Endangered Scholars Worldwide

*The information in this quarterly print report is current as of December 19, 2019. 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](http://www.endangeredscholarsworldwide.net) or follow us at [www.facebook.com/endangeredscholars](https://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](mailto:esw@newschool.edu).*




## **SPECIAL DISPATCH**

On November 18, 2019, Hong Kong police forces stormed a university campus event held by antigovernment protesters, making arrests and threatening to meet further resistance with live rounds, before retreating in the face of a growing fire. Several protesters were arrested while trying to flee.

“We will use minimal force,” police said in a Facebook video. “We are asking the rioters to stop assaulting the police using cars, gas bombs and bows and arrows. Otherwise, we will use force, including live rounds.”

The prodemocracy protests were inspired by a bill that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China. Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam eventually scrapped that legislation, but not before the movement had grown to include the long-held demand that



the Hong Kong people be allowed to vote for their own leaders and remain autonomous from Beijing.

Like all other dictatorships, China regards freedom of thought and political openness as dangerous contaminations. After the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, the Chinese government stepped up its control over students through “patriotic” education campaigns. It also imposed more restrictions on scholars. Yet academics working in universities, think tanks, and NGOs have, over the years, continued to expose and criticize systemic injustices.

Since assuming power in 2012, Xi Jinping has more tightly controlled civil society, the media, and universities, and has strengthened ideological indoctrination. New bans and restrictions on research and teaching on topics such as constitutionalism and civil society have further impeded independent scholarship. Since his inauguration, numerous critical scholars have been silenced, and some have gone into exile.


We at Endangered Scholars Worldwide urge the Chinese government to uphold the legally binding 1984 Joint Declaration, in which Beijing solemnly vowed that freedom “of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of travel, of movement, of correspondence, of strike, of choice, of occupation, of academic research, and of religious belief” would “remain unchanged for 50 years.” ESW further 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 Beijing’s pervasive and ongoing crackdown on Hong Kong universities. Hong Kong’s universities, long a beacon of academic freedom, are under threat and risk losing their autonomy. We believe that universities and academics around the world must take a firm stance when academic freedom is threatened because, ultimately, the global challenge of defending that freedom requires collective and institutionalized action.

## NEW AND CONTINUING CASES

### BAHRAIN

*Scholars and Researchers:* ABDUL-JALIL AL-SINGACE, 57, the former head of the Department of Engineering at the University of Bahrain, has been in Jau Prison since 2011 on a life sentence for allegedly “plotting to overthrow the government” during the Arab Spring protests. Throughout his time in detention, Al-Singace has been subjected to torture and various other forms of mistreatment. Since March 2013, Bahraini officials have consistently ignored Al-Singace’s requests for medical attention despite his long-term poliomyelitis, which has left him paralyzed since childhood. According to reports, Al-Singace has been experiencing severe chest pain, numbness in his fingers, and shaking in his left hand since August 22, 2019. According to his daughter, the prisoner of conscience saw the prison doctor on August 28, for the first time since 2017. The prison doctor recommended that he see a heart specialist in the Bahrain Defense Forces Hospital. On the day of the appointment, prison authorities told Al-Singace that they would not take him there due to his refusal to put on the prison uniform or wear shackles, his family said.

*Students:* ALI MOHAMED HAKEEM AL-ARAB, 23, a nursing student, was arrested on February 9, 2017, with his cousin, AHMED AL-ARAB, 27, who is also a nursing student. Both men were subsequently 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 prisoners, 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. In a December 2018 letter, a group of United Nations experts stated that they were “extremely concerned by allegations that confessions implicating several defendants were obtained under torture and used as evidence in court.” According to a report published by Bahrain Center for Human Rights, Al-Arab has not been permitted to visit a doctor or receive medication since he tried to escape from prison in 2017. The family member said that Al-Arab suffers from severe pain in his leg and his back, as well as several broken teeth and a dislocated jaw, which they alleged were the result of torture.

Whether deliberately or through indifference, Bahraini authorities 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. At the same time we continue to call for the immediate and unconditional release of all Bahraini prisoners of conscience, as well as for the release of all those detained in Bahrain in violation of Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Bahrain is party. ESW asks for letters, emails, and faxes respectfully urging authorities to reconsider any convictions related to this scholar’s peaceful exercise of free speech and association and to ensure his well-being and access to medical attention while in custody, in accordance with international human rights standards.

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 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. After the attack, Fahad was rushed to Sylhet MAG Osmani Medical College Hospital. The attacker is in police custody. His name and the motive of the attack could not be immediately identified.

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:

Ambassador Mohammad Ziauddin  
Embassy of Bangladesh  
3510 International Drive NW

Washington, DC 20008  
USA  
Tel: +1 202 244 2745

## EGYPT

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

Professor HASAN NAFAA is a highly respected political scientist and commentator. According to Al Jazeera, Nafaa's arrest took place after a media smear campaign against him, which aired a leaked recording of a phone call between Nafaa and a journalist asking him to appear in a documentary produced in cooperation with Al-Jazeera. Nafaa is accused of publishing fake news and of incitement against the Egyptian state. According to the *New York Times*, the day before Nafaa's arrest, he wrote a Facebook post that contended in part that "I have no doubt that the continuation of [Egyptian president] Sisi's absolute rule will lead to catastrophe, and that Egypt's interest requires that he leave office as soon as possible, but he will not step down without popular pressure from the street." Following the arrest, Nafaa was taken for a long interrogation session that ended in his being sent to the State Security Court on September 26, 2019. The Court sentenced him 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, Nafaa was detained for an additional 15 days. As of this report, Nafaa remains in prison.

HAZEM HOSNI, a professor of economics and political science, was also 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. 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:

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

Ambassador Amr Abdellatif Aboulatta  
Egyptian Permanent Representative to the  
United Nations  
United Nations  
800 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 10017  
USA

## CHINA

*Scholars and Researchers:* The repression of the Muslim minority in Xinjiang, whatever Beijing may say, is a reality. According to a report published by the French daily newspaper *L'Humanité*, 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 sentenced to death in a secret and grossly unfair trial for “ethnic separatism.” Kidnapped in 2017, he has been arbitrarily detained since then. On March 2017, 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. The authorities have held an estimated 1.5 million Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities accused of harboring “strong religious views” and “politically incorrect” ideas in “re-education” camps, which China claims are an effective tool to protect the country from terrorism and provide vocational training. According to a new report released by the Uyghur Human Rights Project (URHP) on December 15, 2019, the Chinese government has interned, imprisoned, or forcibly disappeared more than 400 intellectu-

als, 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 publication date of the 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 “re-education camps” that the Chinese government describes as having been set up for “vocational training” exercises. The report notes that faculty from Xinjiang 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; the 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 JALALEDDIN, 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 since September 23, 2014, following a two-day trial, 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 mostly Muslim Uyghur ethnic minority in northwest China’s Xinjiang region, Tohti, 49, was arrested on charges of promoting separatism. He is now serving a life term behind bars in China. 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 (RSF) 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.

*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.

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.

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](http://www.court.gov.cn)

## IRAN

*Scholars and Researchers:* Political hostage-taking is nothing new in Iran. Since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran has repeatedly taken foreign nationals and dual citizens hostage for political gains. However, the detention of several dual citizens and western academics epitomizes a new trend.

KYLIE MOORE-GILBERT, a British-Australian professor of Islamic studies, was invited to attend an academic conference in Tehran and decided to remain as a tourist after the conference. However, she was then arrested and is being held in Evin Prison. While the charges against her have not been disclosed, 10-year terms are routinely given in Iran for spying charges, and Moore-Gilbert has recently been conducting research into Shia opposition in the Persian Gulf countries.

Moore-Gilbert is not the only western academics incarcerated at the notorious Evin prison. On July 5, the French-Iranian anthropologist FARIBA ADELKHAH was also arrested as she conducted research into Iranian society. Adelkhah, 60, is a director of research at Sciences Po's Centre for International Studies (CERI) and a well-known anthropologist and researcher on Iran and Shiite Islam. Adelkhah, who is believed to have been arrested by the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) on suspicion of spying, has traveled frequently between the two countries and spent around half of the past 18 months in Iran where her family lives, friend and fellow academic Jean-Francois Bayart told AFP.

The very same day, ROLAND MARCHAL was arrested upon arrival at the airport in Iran. Sciences Po professor Richard Banegas, who

has worked closely with Marchal, said that the arrest occurred when Marchal, a sub-Saharan African, visited Iran to see Adelkhah. According to Banegas, Marchal and Adelkhah were in a romantic relationship.

It is unclear what charges these researchers face. Banegas told The Associated Press that he and colleagues consider Marchal “an academic prisoner.”

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, and Djalali has denied them, 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 18, 2019, 134 Nobel Laureates sent a letter to the Iranian Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, requesting him to intervene personally in this case and to assure Djalali receives a fair trial and subsequent exoneration and release.

Iran has treated Western academics with mistrust since 1979, and Iran has a notorious history when it comes to arresting western journalists and researchers. Some of those arrested were simply negligent, traveling, for example, to Iran for an interview without a press visa; others, such as the *Washington Post* correspondent Jason Rezaian, were experienced authorities on the country.


The recent detention of academics represents a new dimension to Iran’s political hostage-taking. That is why we at Endangered Scholars Worldwide are deeply concerned about the arbitrary detention of dual

nationals in response to their exercise of the rights to academic freedom, free expression, and free 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, to both of which Iran is a party. We believe that universities and academics around the world must take a firm stance when academic freedom is threatened because, ultimately, the global challenge of defending that freedom requires collective and institutionalized action.

*Students:* In the latest wave of oppression against Baha'i students in Iran, Iranian news media reported that the Iranian Minister for Education had ruled that if students mention that they belong to an officially unrecognized religion, like the Baha'i faith, this can be considered as propaganda and the students would be banned from school. ANAHITA HERR, an undergraduate at the School of Architecture at Rasam Institute of Higher Education in Karaj, was expelled from her university and barred from continuing her education because she is Baha'i. Baha'i students in Iran have long been denied the right to higher education. They are often banned from registering for university altogether during the processing of their results on the nationally-competitive college entrance exam known as "Concours." Those who do succeed in enrolling are often summarily expelled.

According to SIMIN FAHANDEJ, a representative of the Baha'i International Community's Office in Geneva to the United Nations, 50 Baha'i students have been expelled from Iranian universities in the current Iranian year (beginning March 21, 2018) because of their religious beliefs. The systematic exclusion of Baha'is in Iran has been accelerated by a policy memorandum drafted in 1991 by the office of the then-president (now Supreme Leader), which blocks the development of the Baha'i community.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide urges Iranian authorities to stop harassing members of the Baha'i community immediately. We call on



President Hassan Rouhani to defend Baha'i students' right to freedom by ensuring that universities allow them to register for college and graduate programs. ESW asks the officials of the Iranian government to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights as specified in international conventions and treaties in accordance with Iran's obligations under international law.

*Students* who remain in prison in Iran include ARASH SADEGHI, 32, 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," said the source, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for security reasons. However, authorities at Raja'i Shahr Prison in Karaj, a city northwest of Tehran, have since repeatedly impeded Sadeghi's access to his urgently needed medical care.

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 one among 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.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide urges the Iranian authorities to release all students behind bars arrested for their peaceful activities and to allow all those who are incarcerated access to medical treatment.

Please send appeals to the following:

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei  
The Office of the Supreme Leader  
Jomhourī 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>

Ayatollah Sadeq̄h Larijani  
Howzeh Riyasat-e Qoveh Qazaiyeh (Office  
of the Head of the Judiciary)  
Pasteur St., Vali Asr Ave., south of Serah-e  
Jomhourī  
Tehran  
Islamic Republic of Iran

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

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>

## SAUDI ARABIA

*Scholars and Researchers:* On November 28, 2019, Endangered Scholars Worldwide learned that the authorities in Saudi Arabia had arrested about a dozen intellectuals and activists, and have increased tactics of “intimidation” and “torture” against other detainees, as reported by the London-based Saudi Human Rights group ALQST. According to ALQST, on November 16, the writers BADER AL RASHED, SULAIMAN AL SAIJAN AL NASER, UAAD AL MUHAYA and MUSAB FUAD were arrested in the capital. The same report notes that 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. On December 18, 2018, he was placed in solitary confinement for a day. 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 in calling 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-Khodr 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:

Ibrahim Abdulaziz Al-Assaf  
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  
Fax: +966 1 4612061

## 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 four 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. If convicted, they face up to one year of imprisonment.

ESW urges Thai authorities to drop these unreasonable charges and repeal the military decree that outlaws peaceful public assemblies of five or more persons.

*Students:* On Thursday, August 3, 2017, a court in Thailand began the closed-door trial of JATUPAT "PAI DAO DIN" BOONPATTARARAKSA, an activist and law student arrested for sharing an article posted on Facebook by the BBC Thai-language service about the country's new king. The student was arrested in December 2016 and convicted on lese majeste charges that landed him behind bars for two and a half years. Jatupat is a prominent member of Dao Din, a small student organization that has protested Thailand's military government. While in detention, he was given the Gwangju Prize, a human rights award from the May 18 Memorial Foundation in South Korea.

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. 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 Srivivhok

Fax 212-688-3029

Permanent Mission of Thailand to the  
United Nations

Thailand@un.int

351 East 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, New York NY 10022

Website: [http://www.thaiembassy.org/  
unmissionnewyork/](http://www.thaiembassy.org/unmissionnewyork/)

## TURKEY

*Scholars, researchers, and students:* Following the signing of the Academics for Peace petition in January 2016 and the coup attempt in July of that year, Turkey's courts and Council of Higher Education (YOK) have taken a series of actions against academics, including the dismissal of all university deans and four university presidents and the shutting down of 15 universities. As this issue goes to press, 6,081 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. While the courts have filed cases against scholars outside the country, those who remain in Turkey following their dismissals have established solidarity and street academies in a number of cities to bring dismissed scholars together and to create an environment for them and their students to connect and produce knowledge.

On July 26, 2019, Turkey's Constitutional Court held a meeting to examine individual applications from 10 academics who had been sentenced to between 15 months and 3 years in prison for having signed the Academics for Peace petition, including ZUBEYDE FUSUN USTEL, who has been in prison 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 overturned the lower courts' rulings with a request for retrial. Since the announcement of the high court's landmark decision, 522 Peace Academics have been acquitted of terrorism charges.

Endangered Scholars Worldwide welcomes this news with great relief. ESW has been monitoring the struggle of academics in Turkey for three years, making inquiries on a daily basis. The ongoing tensions

in Turkey have a profoundly unsettling effect on academic freedom and pose a grave threat to higher education on a national scale. We at ESW consider the Constitutional Court decision a significant development and hope to share the news of full acquittal 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, 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

Abdulhamit Gül  
Minister of Justice  
06669 Kızılay, Ankara  
Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 419 3370  
Email: [info@adalet.gov.tr](mailto:info@adalet.gov.tr)

#### **UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

On September 5, 2017, the United States Department of Justice announced that the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) was being rescinded. As numerous accounts indicate, the majority of DACA recipients are students enrolled in higher education institutions. Ending DACA would, therefore, put the lives of thousands of committed students in the United States in jeopardy, denying them the ability to pursue their education and returning them to a life of anxiety and doubt. On November 8, 2018, a US appeals court blocked President Donald Trump from immediately ending the Obama-era program that shields young immigrants from deportation, saying the administration's decision was based on a flawed legal theory.

Now the fate of nearly 700,000 DACA recipients is in the hands of the US Supreme Court, which must decide if President Trump had the right to end the program. The Supreme Court is expected to rule on the

legality of President Trump’s cancellation of the DACA program in early 2020. In a November 2019 tweet, Trump said of DACA recipients, “If Supreme Court remedies with overturn, a deal will be made with Dems for them to stay!”

We at Endangered Scholars Worldwide believe that upholding DACA will ensure 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**

According to a *Washington Post* report dated December 10, 2019, 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 Mohammad Bin Rashid Al  
Maktoum  
Prime Minister's Office  
PO Box: 212000  
Dubai, United Arab Emirates  
Fax: +971 4 330 404  
info@primeminister.ae

PO Box: 398, Abu Dhabi  
United Arab Emirates  
Fax: +971 2 402 2762 / +971 2 441 5780  
moi@moi.gov.ae

Sheikh Saif bin Zayed Al Nahyan  
Minister of Interior  
Zayed Sport City, Arab Gulf Street, Near to  
Shaikh Zayed Mosque

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

## VIETNAM

On November 15, 2019, Endangered Scholars Worldwide learned that Vietnamese University lecturer PHAM XUAN HAO, 54, was convicted 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.

Since January 2019, there have been arrests of 21 people accused of criticizing the government; 12 of these arrests were the result of online activities. Hao is the 13th individual this year prosecuted for peaceful online political comments. Endangered Scholars Worldwide deplores and condemns the detention of Xuan Hao 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; to call for Hao’s immediate and unconditional release; and to 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, who was 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. According to a report by Amnesty International, Dinh Nguyen has been denied medical treatment following an operation done in December 2016 to remove a tumor from his stomach.

ESW calls upon the Vietnamese government to end the practice of deliberately depriving political prisoners medical treatment and to ensure that detainees receive proper care and parole in time to properly attend to their illnesses.

Please send appeals to the following:

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

## RELEASES

### IRAN

On November 14, 2019, Iranian authorities released HAMID BABAEI, 36, a PhD student at the University of Liege in Belgium, who was detained in August 2013 shortly after his return to Tehran and sentenced to six years in prison on charges of "communicating with hostile foreign governments and spying." Throughout his incarceration, Babaei repeatedly stated that he was imprisoned for refusing to operate as an informant in Belgium for Iran's Intelligence Ministry. On December 21, 2013, in a sham trial that lasted less than 10 minutes, the infamous Judge Abolghasem Salavati of Branch 15 of the Revolutionary Court sentenced Babaei to six years in prison for "cooperation with a hostile government." According to Babaei's wife, Kobra Parsajou, he was denied the right to have his own lawyer and was not informed that the court had chosen a lawyer for him. Throughout the short trial, that lawyer was silent, and Babaei was not allowed to speak in his own defense. Endangered Scholars Worldwide welcomes the news of Babaei's release

with great relief and urges the officials of the Iranian government to end the tactic of taking 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.

On November 19, 2019, Iranian authorities released British-Iranian anthropologist KAMEEL AHMADY, who had been arrested on August 11 on “unspecified charges in connection with his activities.” Ahmady is known internationally for his research on female genital mutilation in rural Iran, about which he published a study in June 2015. Before the study, Iran had not been recognized as a country affected by female genital mutilation; however, according to Reuters, Ahmady’s research, which was based on 4,000 interviews, showed such that such acts are performed in the “secret pockets” of four Iranian provinces: West Azerbaijan, Kurdistan, and Kermanshah in the west, and Hormozgan in the south.

On December 6, 2019, Iranian authorities released XIYUE WANG, a 37-year-old US citizen of Chinese descent who has been imprisoned in Iran since August 2016. He was exchanged for Masoud Soleimani, an Iranian scientist arrested at a Chicago airport last year and convicted on charges of violating US trade sanctions. Wang had been accused of “archiving thousands of Iranian documents and having connections to American intelligence agencies” while researching Iran’s Qajar dynasty for his Princeton University PhD, and was sentenced to 10 years in prison. Endangered Scholars Worldwide welcomes this news with great relief. We are deeply concerned about the recent arbitrary detention of foreign and dual nationals in response to their exercise of the rights to academic freedom, free expression, and free 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 Iran is a party. We urge the officials of the Iranian government to end the tactic of taking dual-citizen scholars and students hostage for political gains and to respect, guarantee, and implement the provisions and principles of human rights.



## AFGHANISTAN

On November 19, 2019, the Taliban released an American and an Australian hostage after the Afghan government freed three imprisoned Taliban officers. American KEVIN KING and Australian TIMOTHY WEEKS were released three years after being kidnapped outside the American University of Kabul, where they worked as professors. In August 2016, the two professors of English were ambushed by gunmen and taken from a vehicle while leaving their university campus in Kabul. Before their release, the whereabouts of the two professors had not been known. Two videos featuring the captives had surfaced after their 2016 abduction. While they appeared pale and sickly in the first video, released in January 2017, a later video showed them in good health. In the video, they said their captors were treating them well and appealed to their governments to help negotiate their release. It is unclear if they were being forced to speak.

## SOURCES

- Al Jazeera English. <http://www.aljazeera.com>  
Amnesty International. <http://www.amnesty.org>  
Bahrain Center for Human Rights. <http://www.bahrainrights.org/en>  
Bianet. <https://bianet.org/>  
Birgun. <https://www.birgun.net/>  
Committee of Concerned Scientists. <http://concernedsScientists.org>  
Council for Assisting Refugee Academics. <http://www.academic-refugees.org>  
Endangered Scholars Worldwide. <http://www.endangered-scholarsworldwide.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