

SCHOLARS AT RISK

ANNUAL REPORT | 2023—2024

CARLETON'S COMMITMENT: DEFENDING SCHOLARS,
ADVANCING ACADEMIC FREEDOM



Carleton
University

Scholars at Risk

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Photo by Mathias Reding

<https://www.pexels.com/photo/people-on-peaceful-protest-against-police-brutality-4646816/>

Opening Remarks

Message from the Carleton University Scholars at Risk Committee Co-Chairs



Andrew Johnston
Department of History



Christine Duff
Department of French



Aaron Doyle
Sociology & Anthropology



Norah Vollmer
Manager, Faculty Affairs

Carleton University has had a Scholars at Risk Committee for over a decade now. We're part of an international network of institutions, established in 2000, whose sole mission is to protect at-risk academics around the world, advocate for teachers, researchers, writers, artists and other intellectuals whose freedom is threatened anywhere, and to promote open discussion of threats to academic rights. Today Carleton's SAR Committee is made up of two dozen faculty, staff, and students from across the university who provide institutional support to visiting at-risk scholars, who, in turn, enrich the Carleton community in countless ways. We also work tirelessly to raise awareness about global academic freedom, hosting guest talks, roundtables, exhibitions, and other events on campus.

Our work is more vital than ever. The SAR Network's "Free to Think 2024" report, published in October, catalogues the increasing global threats to higher education in locations such as Gaza, Ukraine, and Sudan. Attacks on individual academics have a chilling effect on universities, and in turn on the health of democracy. The erosion of norms of openness, the growth of illiberal legislation, the spread of war, and the closing of borders to students and academics alike, have stifled international collaboration. While war and increasing authoritarianism are perhaps the most obvious global threats we face, in subtle ways growing efforts even in traditionally liberal societies such as the United States to erode the institutional autonomy of universities and their curricula, as well as the rights of free expression, pose a new range of challenges. In the face of this, SAR Carleton remains robust and a leader among the over 30 SAR committees in Canada. This report traces both the challenges we face going forward, but also the extraordinary difference we can make.

Message from the Provost and Vice-President (Academic)



Since welcoming our first at-risk scholar in 2014, Carleton University has participated in this unique program through donations from our campus community and support from the Scholars at Risk Network and the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF). The scholars we've been privileged to host at Carleton have become an integral part of our university community, making invaluable contributions to academic units across all Faculties by engaging students, staff, faculty, alumni, and donors. Through lectures, presentations, panel discussions, and research collaborations, they have shared their knowledge and enriched our academic environment.

On behalf of our scholars and the entire Carleton community, thank you for supporting academic freedom through your warm welcome and generous support. Carleton University remains committed to the Scholars At Risk program as an integral part of our academic mission to serve Ottawa and the world.

Message from the Carleton University Academic Staff Association



CUASA's past president, Angelo Mingarelli and former Scholars at Risk Chair Melanie Adrian have been passionate advocates of the SAR program and a major force behind its success since discussions began in 2012 and subsequent inception at Carleton. CUASA and the Scholars at Risk program at Carleton University go back a long way. In fact, CUASA takes pride in being the key initiator of the program on our campus and continues to support it alongside Carleton, in partnership with the global Scholars at Risk network and the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF). CUASA also provides assistance through a research grant for SAR scholars. It has now grown into a fulsome program on campus, and we have welcomed 19 scholars from across the world.

From the comfort of safety that most of us take for granted in Canada, it is hard to imagine how scholars in many parts of the world continue to work under the shadow of everyday surveillance, repression, and threat to their life and work. As we see from the testimonials, this program has had an immeasurably positive impact on countless scholars who have benefited from the support and the safe space to live and conduct their research in. By continuing to support this program, we become part of a global network of scholars and institutions that uphold

and defend human rights and academic freedom. The successful running of the program at Carleton is reliant on our Future Funder campaign. Please pledge your support for the Scholars at Risk program at Carleton by monthly or one-time donations at <https://futurefunder.carleton.ca/giving-fund/scholars-at-risk-fund-giving>.

Message from the SAR Committee Communications Coordinator

As this year marks my final annual report as the SAR Communications Coordinator, I find myself reflecting on how my involvement with this committee began. In 2019, former Scholars at Risk Chair Melanie Adrian reached out to me to ask if I would be interested in serving on the SAR Carleton committee, and every year since that meeting, I have been tasked with responsibility of producing this annual report for the committee. I have never done that work in isolation; each year committee members provide input and support to help me share the amazing accomplishments of SAR Carleton. Norah Vollmer, in particular, has been a steadfast collaborator each year and this year Norah enlisted Monserrat Ramirez Ruvalcaba, a graduate student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, to assist with the collection of data to complete the report. Each year, I am inspired by the commitment and collaboration of my fellow committee members, and their dedication to protecting scholars suffering grave threats to their lives, liberty and wellbeing.

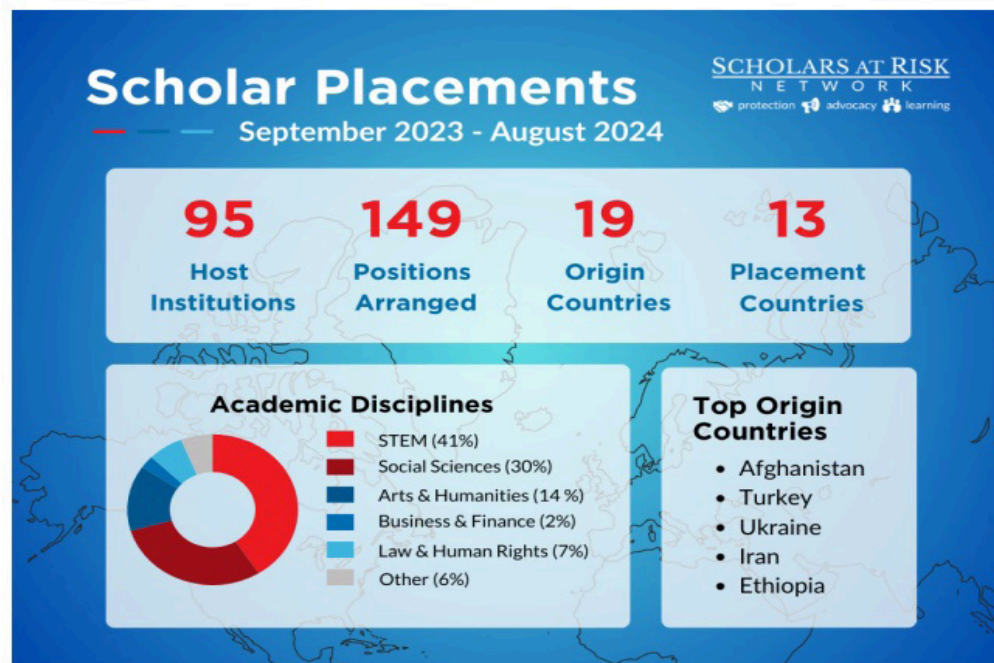
Although I will shortly be moving on to new roles and responsibilities, I will not soon forget my colleagues on the SAR committee or the important work that they have accomplished, and I will long remember the scholars who have impacted me with their stories of resilience and perseverance. More than ever, I hope that this year's annual report will inspire others to support our cause and become involved. As you can imagine, the work of this committee requires considerable financial resources, and we rely on individual donations to supplement the institutional support we receive. As I bid farewell to SAR Carleton, my hope is that they will be continue to be supported by the academic community so that they can not only sustain their current achievements but work to increase the level of support and benefits for visiting scholars.



Your donations help us make a difference!

Scholars at Risk—At a glance

In the World



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

At Carleton University

\$37,980

Amount raised last year from the Carleton University community to support SAR

6

Global Scholars at Risk hosted to date at Carleton University

14

In-person scholars hosted to date at Carleton University

100+

Donors contributed to SAR Carleton's funding last year

Carleton University's Scholars at Risk Committee Update

Our Mission: Protecting Academic Freedom, Creating Pathways for Scholars

Over the past year, SAR Carleton has focused on four key goals designed to help at-risk scholars continue their important work in Canada. Our efforts have centered around immigration pathways, supporting scholars' academic and cultural integration, helping them contribute globally, and working towards a nationally recognized program.

Key Goals for 2023-24

1. Viable Immigration Pathways and Durable Solutions in Canada
Address legal and immigration issues by understanding and navigating Canada's complex immigration system, including visa applications, work permits, and permanent residency requirements.
2. Navigating Next Steps in the Canadian Context
 - a) Ensure continued academic engagement and foster career development by: maintaining academic momentum and adapting to different teaching styles and academic expectations in Canadian universities; and providing access to opportunities for professional development and career advancement.
 - b) Support cultural adjustment, social integration, and access to support services, including: adapting to a new cultural and social environment; building social networks and community connections within the University and the broader Canadian society to foster a sense of belonging; and ensuring awareness of and eligibility for available support services such as mental health counseling and integration programs.
3. Preserving Knowledge Networks and Contributing to Democratic and Inclusive Governance Globally
Maximize potential of scholars to contribute to Canada's intellectual and economic competitiveness with in-demand skills.
4. Establishing a National Program in Canada
Address financial constraints by securing funding for salaries, living expenses, and other costs for at-risk scholars as well as funding for program staffing and development.

A Growing Legacy of Support (2014-2024)

In 2014, Carleton University and the University of Ottawa joined the Scholars at Risk Network and, through a partnership, the two universities worked together to co-host their first at-risk scholar in 2015-16. After a productive first year, both programs began to grow and each university began hosting scholars independently. Since then, SAR Carleton has had a significant impact on the local and international academic community. This would not have been possible without the help and support of the larger Carleton community. Thank you.

Hosting Scholars

Carleton welcomes scholars through three main pathways, including:

- hosting at-risk scholars in person for one to two-years as recommended by the Scholars at Risk committee and with the support of the hosting academic department/unit;
- offering financial support (a travel/research grant) for visiting professors hired through an academic department/unit;
- inviting honorary ranks or guest lecturers as recommended by an academic department/unit
- coordinating the global scholars program for at-risk scholars who continue to reside in their home countries and providing a university affiliation and access to university resources through MacOdrum Library

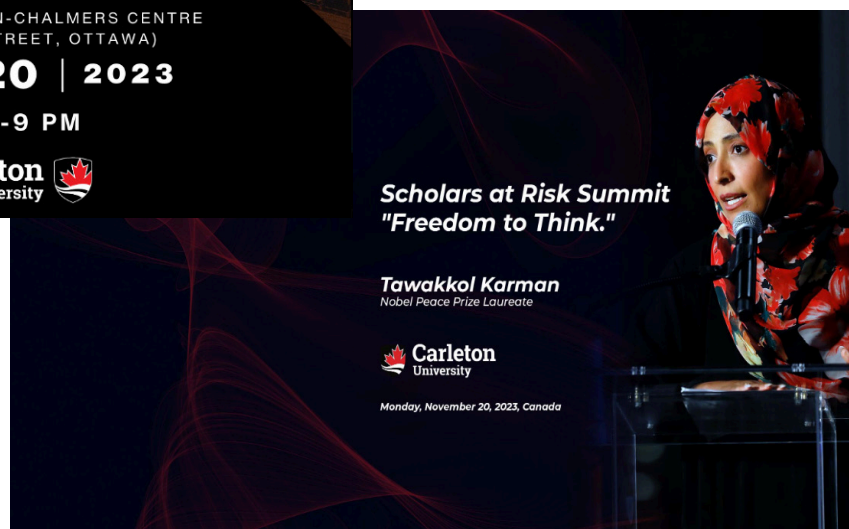
Carleton University's Scholars at Risk Committee Update

2023-24 Financial Overview & Achievements

With a budget supported by Carleton's Provost, Faculty Deans, Carleton University Academic Staff Association, generous community donations, and small grants from the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF), the Scholar at Risk Ukraine Fellowships from the SAR Network, and the Afghan Challenge Fund from the Open Society University Network, we've successfully maintained a sustainable model. This year, we raised over \$37,900 from 100 donors, a testament to the ongoing support from our community.

Notable achievements include:

- Hosted two at-risk scholars on campus and supported five Global Scholars remotely.
- November 20-21, 2023: Hosted the "Freedom to Think Summit" featuring Nobel Laureate Tawakkol Abdel-Salam Karman, highlighting the importance of academic freedom.
- March 7, 2024: Collaborated with Queen's University and Canadian immigration officials to align at-risk scholars with Canadian universities.
- March 21-22, 2024: Launched a new pilot program for academic career alignment for at-risk scholars in Canada.



Carleton University's Scholars at Risk Committee Update

Looking Forward to 2024-25: What's Next?

The upcoming year promises exciting developments as we continue our vital work:

- Continuing to welcome more scholars to Carleton, both in-person and remotely.
- Expanding our Academic Career Alignment program to help at-risk scholars navigate the Canadian academic landscape.
- December 2, 2024: Hosting an art exhibition by Ukrainian artist Nataliia Kononova to mark Human Rights Day, featuring keynote speakers including Bob Rae, Canada's UN Ambassador.
- April 2025: Expanding SAR Carleton's Academic Career Alignment program for a second iteration.
- May 2025: Hosting an academic conference titled, "Critical Support: Lessons and Strategies for Hosting At-Risk Scholars", at Carleton University.

How You Can Help

Every contribution makes a significant impact! Donate online to Carleton University's Scholars at Risk initiative here. Your support changes lives by helping scholars at risk continue their vital work. Have questions or want to get involved? Feel free to contact me, Norah Vollmer, at norah.vollmer@carleton.ca.



Norah Vollmer
SAR Carleton Co-Chair
SAR Canada Steering Committee Member
norah.vollmer@carleton.ca



Continuing to Support Remote Scholars

Rationale

Throughout the world, thousands of academics face serious threats to their lives and livelihoods, based on their research. Many are punitively dismissed from their institutions, as well as persecuted by hostile governments. Without academic affiliations, these scholars are unable to continue their research, submit papers, and have the expected connection with peers. To address this issue, SAR Carleton created a remote scholars program in conjunction with the established Scholars at Risk Program. This initiative provides remote scholars at risk with a university affiliation and access to university resources through MacOdrum Library. While this proposal barely addresses the large number of scholars who have been deprived of academic freedom and connections in their home countries, it is hoped that Carleton University can make a difference in this regard and serve as model for other institutions.

The Program

Each year, Carleton University supports up to five scholars who are in their home countries and have been deprived of academic freedom and connections. These designations would, for two years (on a renewable basis for up to five years), allow a scholar based in another country who has lost their institutional affiliations to:

- Be designated as an Adjunct Professor or Adjunct Research Professor according to established departmental and university practices.
- Have remote access to research databases via MacOdrum Library.
- Have a Carleton University email, allowing for the researcher to submit their work to journals with an institutional affiliation and a listing in Carleton University Directory.
- When appropriate or possible, have professional contacts with Carleton University faculty in the discipline (such as presenting virtually during a class session, discussing research with likeminded faculty and/or students, etc.). Academic Units, for instance, might be encouraged to appoint a faculty host.

As an academic who lost her job in a political environment marked by rights violations in her home country, I would like to say that the opportunity provided by Carleton University has been very valuable to me, especially because of the sense of belonging. In addition, access to libraries and online databases has been very helpful to my studies. The willingness of colleagues at Carleton to collaborate and do things together was also very gratifying.

-Former remote scholar

Impact

In 2016, Carleton University was one of 7 universities in Canada supporting Scholars at Risk. Today, in 2024, there are 30 member universities across the nation. To date, Carleton has supported half a dozen remote scholars in a range of disciplines, ranging from Film Studies to Engineering to Economics. The program builds on the established foundations of the Scholars at Risk Program and benefits from remote technologies to support continued research and knowledge-production. Remote scholars are located around the world and the connections provided by Carleton University are intended to be a support bridge until, hopefully, a more permanent situation can be created. In some cases, this has already occurred but there is still much to be done.



Carleton University

Scholars at Risk

<https://carleton.ca/scholars-at-risk/>

Scholar Perspectives

Remarks from Carleton Scholars



FROM ILLIA KONONOV, INSTITUTE OF EUROPEAN, RUSSIAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES

My name is Illia Kononov. In Ukraine, I worked as the head of the Department of Philosophy and Sociology at the Lugansk Taras Shevchenko National University. I hold a Ph.D. in sociology and I defended my dissertation at the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv. I am a full professor. Russia's aggression caught me in the city of Bakhmut. For a month, my wife and I lived under shelling. Our university was evacuated to Poltava where we had no physical premises and no library. I began to receive threats of physical violence from the occupied territory. The program Scholars at Risk literally saved my life and the life of my wife. My stay at Carleton University allowed me to return to my academic work, which now centers on the sociological study of war. At Carleton University, my wife and I met wonderful people who helped us adapt to Canadian life.

During the first year of work at Carleton, I acquired some knowledge of the English language. Although I am not yet proficient in English, I can already read English-language scholarship. I published one scholarly article in a reputable Canadian journal: "Ukrainian refugees of the period of the Russian-Ukrainian war in NATO countries: the geopolitical context of the military migration crisis," Canadian Foreign Policy Journal, 2023 Currently, I am working on a sociological study of the Russian-Ukrainian war and the possible post-war structure of Ukraine.



FROM MUSTAFA BAHRAN, DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

In 2015, the war in Yemen forced me and my family to flee to Saudi Arabia. In January 2017, I joined Oklahoma University as a visiting professor supported by the IIE-SRF and Oklahoma University. In June 2018, I joined Carleton university department of Physics as a visiting professor supported by the IIE-SRF and SAR Carleton. When my wife and I visited the Carleton campus for the first time, immediately upon arriving, we were taken aback by the beauty of the environment surrounding the campus, particularly the riverside. The first thing we noticed was the friendly and helpful people on campus. We were surprised that every time we would ask someone for directions, they would walk us to our destination while smiling and wishing us well; this made us feel immensely welcome. Indeed, there is something unique about the level of kindness displayed here in Ottawa, specifically at Carleton. It has left a positive impression on us that continues to increase as time goes on.

I have been at Carleton for more than five years now and I have been able to contribute to the great academic and research work that Carleton university entails. I have taught University Physics for more than 1000 students so far. I continue doing working on a research project supported via grant from Carleton concentrating on one of the current and topical issues in physics education research; namely the role of physics labs teaching component in reinforcing physics concepts introduced in class lectures.

I have been engaged with Carleton community as well as Ottawa at large speaking about the cause of scholars at risk. I have been also engaged in advocating to stop the war in Yemen within my Carleton community, Canada, and the world at large. I have been writing Op-Ed pieces in Canadian press. I am also heavily involved with NGOs registered in Ontario such as "Friends of Yemen Organization" and the "Association of Yemeni Academics and Professionals". In summary, I have been fortunate to join Carleton university and work with excellent academics, researchers, students and staff.

Scholar Perspectives

Remarks from Carleton Scholars

FROM MOHAMMAD, SPROTT SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



My academic journey began in Kabul, Afghanistan, where I had the honor of serving as a university professor for eight years. During this time, I also led the Faculty of Economics and Management as dean for three years. It was an immensely fulfilling experience to work in an academic setting alongside the dedicated and hardworking students of my country. Seeing my former students excel as graduate and doctoral scholars at prestigious universities worldwide, as well as taking up high-ranking positions in government and non-government sectors, deepened my commitment to Afghanistan's educational future.

I have always been passionate about fostering both knowledge and critical thinking in my students. Open discussions, including those on political and ideological matters, were a cornerstone of my teaching philosophy. Despite encountering occasional resistance due to the shifting political landscape in Afghanistan, I remained dedicated to providing a well-rounded education that encouraged students to think critically and engage with complex issues.

Unfortunately, with the return of the Taliban to power, the academic landscape in Afghanistan changed dramatically. This new reality forced me to make the heart-wrenching decision to leave my home country,

along with my career and possessions. Thankfully, support from SAR New York and the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund (IIE-SRF) allowed me to relocate to Ottawa and affiliate with Carleton University as a visiting scholar.

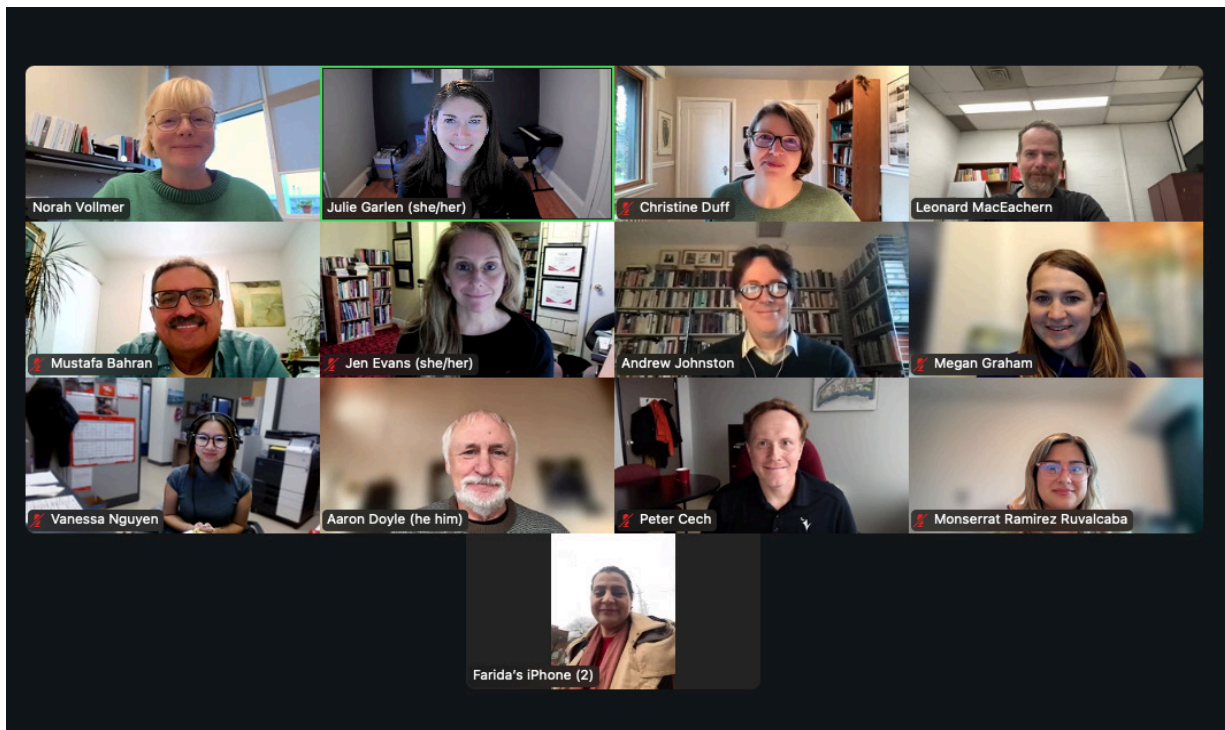
Carleton University's support has been invaluable in helping me rebuild and continue my academic pursuits. I am profoundly grateful to the Sprott School of Business, my generous host within the university, and to the SAR Committee for their unwavering support. Their commitment to academic freedom, human rights, and the protection of at-risk scholars has deeply impacted not only my life but the lives of many others.

Looking ahead, I am reminded of the critical role that organizations and universities play in safeguarding lives and academic careers under threat. Afghanistan has undergone profound changes, and the freedoms we once valued are now at risk. Through the collective efforts of SAR, IIE-SRF, and academic institutions like Carleton University, we stand as a beacon of hope, working to preserve knowledge, promote critical thinking, and resist oppression globally. I am honored to be part of the Carleton University SAR Committee and remain committed to advancing these essential efforts.

2023-2024 Carleton University Scholars at Risk Committee*

Professor Mustafa Bahran, Department of Physics
Peter Cech, Risk and Insurance Manager
Professor Aaron Doyle (Co-chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology)
Professor Dana Dragunoiu, Department of English Language and Literature
Professor Christine Duff, (Co-chair), Department of French
Professor Jennifer Evans, Department of History
Professor Julie Garlen, Director, Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies
Adjunct Research Professor Megan Graham, Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Professor Andrew Johnston (Co-chair), Department of History
Professor Laura Madokoro, Department of History
Professor Leonard MacEachern, Department of Electronics
Professor Angelo Mingarelli, School of Mathematics and Statistics
Professor Luciara Nardon, Sprott School of Business
Librarian Aleksandra Blake, Head, Access Services, MacOdrum Library
Nicholas Saucier, Training, Investigations, and Case Manager, Campus Safety Services
Norah Vollmer, (Co-chair), Manager, Faculty Affairs, Office of the Deputy Provost
SAR Community Members

*Some committee members' names omitted to protect privacy.



A virtual SAR Carleton Committee Meeting

Freedom to Think Summit

Carleton Dominion-Chalmers Centre, November 20-21, 2023

SAR Carleton marked its 10th anniversary as a member of the SAR international network a year ago this month. Before then, in March 2023, we chose to mark the milestone by hosting a “Free to Think Conversation” in the MacOdrum Library. We used this event to launch an international conference eight months later in November 2023. It was dedicated to SAR international’s academic freedom project writ large. And it was long the dream of one of Carleton’s earliest Scholars at Risk, Dr. Mustafa Bahran, who came to Carleton in 2018 after fleeing Yemen’s civil war. Since then, he and his family have been able to stay in Ottawa and he continues to teach in Carleton’s physics department, becoming an expert in science pedagogy.

Dr. Bahran came to Carleton as an exiled physicist, and a former senior member of Yemen’s government. While he had been politicized since his student days, it was his experience in SAR that made him an extraordinarily passionate and tireless ambassador for the principle of academic freedom around the world. And it was he who wanted Carleton to host a special international gathering that focused on the annual Report of the Scholars at Risk Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, a document which quantifies the global threat to intellectual freedom.

And so the Freedom to Think Summit, generously funded by Carleton, the MESA Global Academy, the SAR Network, and the IIE’s Scholar Rescue Fund, was dedicated to the global higher education community. It especially stood in solidarity with all those who have had to exhibit particular courage and determination in sustaining the open and free production of knowledge. In 2021, SAR’s Free to Think Report recorded 332 attacks on higher education communities in 65 countries; a year later, that number had risen to 409 attacks in 66 countries, including—more and more—in countries that had once regarded themselves as bastions of intellectual openness. This includes, we were forced to say, countries quite close to Canada.



Andrew Johnston



Mustafa Bahran

Nearly 40 scholars from 15 countries gave papers at this summit [1]. Some presentations were first-hand accounts, while others represented the consummation of new research into the conditions facing scholars and human rights advocates today, and, just as important, the social and political causes of intellectual repression. Some addressed cyber disinformation, others researched challenges to academic gender diversity in conservative societies, or democratic retreat in the face of authoritarianism, or the mental health of Afghan girls banned from education, as well as offering case studies from Uganda, Ethiopia, Iran, Pakistan and others.

SAR Carleton chose to bring as many speakers as we could to this conversation. The program was densely packed with in-person and online participants, because we wanted it to be more than just a *cri de cœur*. What we have always wanted is to articulate the common principles of a global movement for the protection of academic freedom in the face of these proliferating threats, and to find the means and voice not just of protecting, but of pushing back. Something of that spirit of resistance was captured in opening night performances by the Carleton University Choir, spoken word artist MayaSpoken, and Jamaal Jackson Rogers, aka JustJamaal ThePoet.

The Summit's aim to start with a celebration of resistance was most embodied by the keynote address. Yemeni Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Tawakkol Karman focused not just on her struggles as a human rights activist, journalist, and advocate for press freedom since the Arab Spring, but on the wider attacks on human intellectual freedom through war, discrimination, economic dislocation, and resulting global refugee crises. The work has just begun.

[1] Canada, Yemen, Turkey, Syria, Ukraine, the United States, India, Germany, Russia, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burundi, the Philippines, and Poland



Norah Vollmer, Tawakkol Karman, Pauline Rankin, Mustafa Bahran, Andrew Johnston

Why Donate to SAR Carleton?

Carleton's Scholars at Risk Hub



Building on Carleton's momentum and leadership, the University is the national hub promoting academic freedom, protecting threatened scholars, and welcoming international talent.

With universities across the country, we share best practices, develop new programs for integration, and advocate for academic freedom globally.

Key Messages

Commitment to Academic Freedom

- Since 2013, Carleton's Scholars at Risk (SAR) program has consistently championed academic freedom, offering protection to scholars and supporting intellectual growth.
- Carleton has welcomed 19 at-risk scholars: 14 who relocated to Ottawa, benefiting from a safe environment to continue their work; while five maintain access to Carleton's MacOdrum Library and other resources from abroad.

Providing Safe Haven

- The SAR program provides critical safe refuge for scholars facing life-threatening conditions.
- Carleton has hosted scholars from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Russia, Syria, Turkey, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, and Yemen.

Global Impact

- Carleton University supports global academic solidarity, inclusive and democratic governance, and preserves knowledge across various fields for scholars from diverse countries affected by conflict and repression.
- About 1/3 of Carleton's academic units have hosted at-risk scholars with expertise in art and culture, biology, communications, economics, engineering, English, journalism, legal studies, linguistics, mathematics, physics, political science, sociology.

Advocacy and Support

- Carleton's centrally supported, multidisciplinary committee, with expertise in migration, human rights, and security, advocates for the rights and protection of scholars, influencing global policies.
- Carleton continues to advocate for viable immigration pathways and durable solutions in Canada for at risk scholars.

Community Engagement and Educational Outreach

- The SAR program enriches Carleton's academic environment by integrating diverse perspectives and establishing new connections in scholarship and research.

How to get involved

Support us with a donation

You can donate to Carleton University's Scholars at Risk initiative online at <https://futurefunder.carleton.ca/giving-fund/scholars-at-risk-fund-giving/>, where you have the option of making a one-time donation or a monthly pledge. All donations have a tangible impact on the lives of SAR scholars in our community. Thank you!

Learn more about SAR



Scholars at Risk

Carleton Scholars at Risk
<https://carleton.ca/scholars-at-risk/>

SCHOLARS AT RISK

NETWORK CANADA SECTION

SAR Canada
<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/sections/sar-canada/>

SCHOLARS AT RISK

N E T W O R K

 protection  advocacy  learning

Scholars at Risk network
<https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/>



Scholar Rescue Fund
www.scholarrescuefund.org



Carleton University

Scholars at Risk

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CARLETON'S COMMITMENT:
DEFENDING SCHOLARS, ADVANCING ACADEMIC FREEDOM