

President of Ireland offers "wholehearted support" for SAR's work "in the service of truth and freedom"

The President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, gave an inspiring opening address at *Ideas are not Crimes*, a special event organized by the Scholars at Risk Ireland Section, coordinated by Universities Ireland, at Trinity College Dublin last week.

In his speech, President Higgins noted the alarming increase in attacks on scholars around the world, referring to the findings of Scholars at Risk's [Free to Think 2016 report](#). "Such repression, which conflates intellectual inquiry and critical discourse with 'disloyalty,' does not simply endanger academic freedom", he said. "It has consequences for the freedom of all citizens. Indeed, it endangers democracy itself, in those countries where it exists, and the possibility of democracy, where there is none."

The President emphasized the immense scope and global nature of current challenges to academic freedom: "The fact that blatant attacks on truth, knowledge and science are now happening in countries that have been bastions of academic freedom is a huge matter for concern – one that should serve to mobilise in new ways the international community of scholars."

The event also featured dialogues with scholars from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Sri Lanka, with discussions focusing on current conditions for academics in those countries, and the role of the global higher education community in together addressing such historic pressures.

SAR sections around the world have responded to the increased pressures on scholars by redoubling their efforts to promote academic freedom. Recent SAR section meetings in the Netherlands & Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, and Germany charted the way forward, while SAR Norway will host the [official launch of *Free to Think 2016*](#) this evening and SAR Canada will gather for a [high-profile event at the Canadian Parliament](#) on Thursday.

[Read the full speech »](#)

Events



Free to Think: Egypt, Thailand, and Venezuela | December 7 | Oslo

Scholars at Risk and the SAR Norway Section present an evening panel discussion and reception in celebration of the release *Free to Think 2016* report at the Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (HiOA).



President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins: "Of one thing we can be certain. It is important not to be intimidated into any colluding or evasive silence."



SAR Canada at Canadian Parliament: Threats to Academic Freedom | December 8 | Ottawa

The SAR Canada Section and Canadian MPs host a discussion featuring Prof. Homa Hoodfar and the Hon. Irwin Coulter at the Canadian Parliament and uOttawa. SAR Board Member Prof. Irving Epstein will provide remarks.



Strategies to protect human rights researchers and academics at risk | December 9 | London

SAR's Sinead O'Gorman and Cara's Stephen Wordsworth speak at the Human Rights Consortium's workshop on strategies to protect and promote the rights of human rights defenders and academics at risk.

[All Events »](#)

Scholars at Risk

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Scholar of Business Management from Turkey

This junior scholar has several years of experience teaching university courses on international business, organization theory, and business management, among others. He has also published several academic articles and is in the process of publishing a book on multinational enterprises. This scholar faces risk following the attempted July 2016 coup in Turkey. (Turkey 525)

Scholar of Urban and Regional Planning from Turkey

This scholar specializes in regional development, participatory planning and urban movements. She has several years of teaching and research experience in Turkey and in Germany and has published numerous books and academic articles on urban planning. She faces risk of arrest, harassment and loss of position after signing a peace petition in Turkey. (Turkey 545)

Scholar of Modern Turkish History from Turkey

This scholar of modern Turkish history, political science, and international relations focuses on urban sociology, social movements, Turkish political history. He has taught at several universities in Turkey and has experience publishing academic articles and translating academic texts. This scholar was previously arrested and continues to face risk of harassment and imprisonment after signing a peace petition in Turkey. (Turkey 664)

[All Scholars Seeking Assistance »](#)