

Side event on the margins of the 59th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council: Regional Approaches to Implementing the Right to Academic Freedom

Sponsored by Colombia, Portugal and the European Union



24 June 2025, 12:00 – 13:00, Room XXII at Palais des Nations, Geneva (and online)

Register to attend in-person [here](#) (please note space is limited and you will need a valid UN pass and you must also register through [Indico](#))

Register to attend virtually [here](#)

The right of academic freedom is essential to safeguarding and passing on cultures of research, teaching, inquiry and expression that support rights-respecting societies. Yet for the past two decades, academic freedom has been in decline and continues to be under attack in all corners of the globe today. Reporting from the Academic Freedom Index, as well as Scholars at Risk's annual [Free to Think](#) report, highlights concerning trends across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Given the widespread nature of these attacks, an equally robust response is needed to reverse these trends, one that engages with both global efforts, such as the [Principles for Implementing the Right to Academic Freedom](#), and with regional efforts, including the establishment of [regional coalitions for academic freedom](#).

To illustrate what these efforts look like in practice as well as what must be done to strengthen academic freedom protections, this discussion will feature leading voices from global and regional initiatives including:

- Farida Shaheed: [UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education](#)
- Bencharat Sae Chua: Director - [Southeast Asia Coalition for Academic Freedom](#)
- Camilla Croso: Director - [Coalition for Academic Freedom in the Americas](#)
- Kwadwo Appiagyei-Atua: Director - [Africa Coalition for Academic Freedom](#)
- Jesse Levine: Senior Advocacy Officer - [Scholars at Risk](#) (moderator)

The event will be held in English without interpretation and will include brief prepared remarks by the panelists followed by a question-and-answer session with the audience. Please note that you will need a valid UN pass to access the meeting room and, as space is limited, in-person registration will be closed once room capacity has been reached. For any questions, please contact Jack Mayerhofer at jm11257@nyu.edu.