

Public Statement on the Right to Academic Freedom

**For democracy.
For knowledge as a public good.
Right to Academic Freedom NOW!**



At a time when democracies are under growing pressure, defending academic freedom has become an urgent democratic imperative.

Academic freedom is not a privilege reserved for educational institutions. It is an individual, institutional and collective human right, and states are obliged to respect, protect and realize it. It protects the freedom to teach, learn, research, create, question, debate and share knowledge without fear of censorship, intimidation, discrimination or political interference. It belongs to educators, researchers, students and academic institutions alike, as well as to broader society, who benefits from knowledge as a public good.

When academic freedom is under attack, societies lose much more than scholarly independence. They lose their capacity to understand reality, to confront injustice, to innovate, to imagine alternatives and to make democratic decisions based on knowledge rather than fear or disinformation.

Knowledge is a public good. Universities and educational institutions are not isolated from society; they are among the institutions through which democratic societies cultivate critical thinking, scientific inquiry, cultural diversity and informed public debate. Protecting academic freedom therefore means protecting democracy itself and securing the underlining infrastructure for it to thrive.

Today, throughout the Americas and beyond, attacks on academic freedom are increasing. Scholars and students are harassed and persecuted. Universities face political and economic pressures that undermine their autonomy. Scientific evidence is discredited, books are banned, curricula are restricted and public debate is increasingly polarized. At the same time, the very meaning of academic freedom is being contested by narratives that seek to detach it from democracy, human rights, equality and scientific integrity.

We reject these attempts.

Academic freedom cannot be invoked to legitimize discrimination, hate or pseudoscience. Nor can it exist where fear, exclusion, violence or structural inequalities prevent people from participating fully in the production and exchange of knowledge. Academic freedom flourishes only where democratic institutions, human rights and scientific integrity are protected.



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The adoption of the Inter-American Principles on Academic Freedom and University Autonomy in 2021 marked a historic recognition of academic freedom as a human right. The challenge before us now is implementation.

In their fifth anniversary, we therefore call upon governments, legislatures, courts, universities, schools, scientific institutions, funding agencies, international organizations, civil society, the media and all those committed to democracy to:

- » Recognize and implement the right to academic freedom as a fundamental human right.
- » Protect the autonomy and democratic governance of educational institutions and ensure they are available and accessible to all.
- » Ensure safe, inclusive and non-discriminatory learning and research environments.
- » Protect educators, researchers and students facing threats, violence or persecution, being particularly sensitive and attentive to intersectional discriminations.
- » Defend scientific integrity and evidence-based knowledge against disinformation and anti-scientific attacks.
- » Promote equitable participation in knowledge production, recognizing the diversity of peoples, perspectives and knowledge systems that enrich our societies.
- » Ensure that education and research remain public goods that serve the common good.

The future of democracy depends on societies capable of thinking freely, questioning openly and producing knowledge collectively.

Defending academic freedom is defending democracy.
Defending academic freedom is defending the right to know.
Defending academic freedom is defending our shared future.