



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by Amman Center for Human Rights Studies, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[22 August 2019]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **Amman Center of Human Rights studies statement on academic freedom**

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies would like to emphasize the issue of Academic Freedom.

Defined in 1997 by UNESCO, the Academic Freedom recommendations consists of four components; freedom of teaching, freedom of research, freedom of intramural expression, freedom of extramural expression.

Moreover, the Academic Freedom recommendations stand for “the right, without constriction by prescribed doctrine, to freedom of teaching and discussion, freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof, freedom to express freely their opinion about the institution or system in which they work, freedom from institutional censorship and freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies”.

We see how in many countries both political and economic pressures further reduce academic freedom. The lack of support faced by teachers creates a situation in which this freedom is reduced and slowly forgotten by those who should promote and defend it.

The Academic Freedom recommendations finds its roots in the right to education. The article 13 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights, implies that the right to education can only be provided through an academic freedom.

Amman Center for Human Rights Studies would like to put focus on the academic freedom in the Arab countries. In areas where violent conflict arises, intimidation and violence have been forced upon students and teachers in order to limit academic freedom. Since 2011 the Middle Eastern and North African universities have increasingly been targets of censorship, state interference and political violence.

These acts violate human rights standards. Moreover, the situation creates and reproduces the certainty that principles of universality and human rights will be breached and in return, will not be integrated by generations to come.

It is clear that a common framework, defining, promoting and defending academic freedom is needed.

In 2004, Amman Center for Human Rights Studies created the ACHRS’s Measurement on Academic Freedoms in the Arab Universities, which observes universities and their academic freedom through six indicators that contribute towards independence, democratic measurements, critical thinking and many more. However with a lack of support and contribution from international institutions it remains vitally clear that academic freedom is unlikely to be implemented.

In order to strengthen Academic Freedom, the Amman Center for Human Rights Studies demands:

- The creation of an International Declaration on Academic Freedom.
- The creation of measurement criteria on Academic Freedom that would focus on; the independence of academic institutions, intellectual freedoms of the academic community members, the right of access to higher education and access to education, governance, the rights of academics and gender equality.
- The application of the UNESCO recommendation agreements adopted in December 2018 concerning Academic Freedom.
- To show and give support to teachers and students facing threat when they use their Academic freedom.
- The end of political and economic pressure reducing academic freedom.
- The establishment of a mechanism that measures the academic freedom restrains through empirical methods.