



BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

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Statement about the ongoing detention of Yashar Darolshafa and repressive actions against students in Iran

The British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) Committee on Academic Freedom expresses deep concern over the ongoing [detention of Iranian scholar and civil rights activist Mr Yashar Darolshafa](#), who was violently arrested on 1 June 2026 at his residence in Tehran and is currently detained in an unknown location. We understand that his belongings have been confiscated and that, at the time of writing, the Iranian authorities have provided no reasons for his detention.

The BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom undertakes extensive work to monitor and defend academic freedom in the research, study, and teaching of the Middle East and North Africa in the UK and Europe, as well as academic freedom more broadly in the region. We join [other scholars, intellectuals and scholarly associations](#) in demanding that the circumstances of Yashar Darolshafa's detention and the reasons for his arrest be disclosed.

Mr Darolshafa is a well-known progressive social researcher, currently registered as a PhD student at the University of Social Welfare and Rehabilitation Sciences of Tehran. Mr Darolshafa was previously arrested in 2009, 2019, and 2022. He has always demonstrated an interest in social justice and the defence of equal rights, in his work as both a scholar and a public intellectual. He is also a member of the Pedagogy Committee of the Iranian Sociological Association. There appears to be no basis for his arrest other than his academic work and writings on sociology and policy analysis. His detention therefore represents a grave violation of academic freedom.

The BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom also emphasises that Mr Darolshafa's case is not unique. The Committee is deeply concerned by [the recent wave of disciplinary actions, including suspensions, expulsions, and arrests targeting students across Iran's universities](#), including Sharif University of Technology, the University of Tehran, Shahid Beheshti University, Iran University of Science and Technology, and the University of Birjand. The cases reported indicate that hundreds of students have been subjected to disciplinary investigations and punitive measures because of their participation in peaceful protests, student activism, or the expression of political views. The [execution of Erfan Shakourzadeh](#), an MA student at the Iran University of Science and Technology, in May 2026, is an extremely worrying precedent.

The BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom urges the Iranian authorities to provide information about Yashar Darolshafa's whereabouts and legal status and to guarantee that all due process rights are respected. It furthermore urges the authorities to immediately halt all disciplinary actions against students that are based on their participation in peaceful protest, student activism, or the expression of political views, to guarantee their right to education, and to uphold Iran's obligations under international law.

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For the attention of:

- Ms Farida Shaheed, UNSR on the right to education <hrc-sr-education@un.org>
- Ms Irene Khan, UNSR on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression <hrc-sr-freedex@un.org>
- Ms Gina Romero Rodríguez, UNSR on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association <hrc-sr-freeassembly@un.org>
- Dr Alice Jill Edwards, UNSR on torture and head, Working Group on Arbitrary Detention <hrc-wg-ad@un.org>
- Mr Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights <ohchr-InfoDesk@un.org>

To read previous letters and statements from BRISMES CAF, please visit:

[Committee on Academic Freedom](#)

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