



# BRISMES

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies

British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 71-75 Shelton Street, Covent Garden, London WC2H 9JQ

Email: [office@brismes.org](mailto:office@brismes.org)

Website: [www.brismes.ac.uk](http://www.brismes.ac.uk)

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H.E. Mr. Mohammadreza Sabouri

Ambassador, IRI Embassy in Italy

Sent by Email: [iranemb.rom@mfa.gov.ir](mailto:iranemb.rom@mfa.gov.ir)

30 September 2024

Your Excellency,

We thank you for your answer to [our letter](#) of 10th September 2024 about the violations of academic freedom that are taking place in Iran.

We were disappointed, however, that your response made no reference to the contents of our letter on the situation for academics in Iran. It appears clear from your response, which discussed the situation in Palestine and academic freedom on Palestine, that you have not had the opportunity to make yourself familiar with the work that our associations' Committees on Academic Freedom have done in the past years with regard to the situation in Palestine, and in terms of academic freedom to discuss Palestine.

As you can see from the websites of [BRISMES](#), [MESA](#) and [SeSaMO](#), all three associations have been clear and vocal in condemning the attacks on Palestinian students and academics by the Israeli military and by Israeli institutions; in defending the academic freedom of our Palestinian colleagues in Israeli universities, as in the recent case of Prof. Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian among others; in defending the rights of our colleagues employed in the universities of our respective countries to express opinions critical of Israel and Zionism; in denouncing the IHRA definition of antisemitism as a violation of academic freedom; in condemning acts of genocide and ethnic cleansing committed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories by the Israeli military; and in defending students and faculty targeted for their outspokenness in our respective countries from police and institutional violence.

You can find some of our statements and letters about these topics below.

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA)

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Letters & statements from the MESA Board re: Palestine:

<https://mesana.org/advocacy/letters-from-the-board/-/-/palestine-israel>

Letters from CAF-Middle East and North Africa re: Palestine

<https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/-/-/palestine-israel>

Letters from CAF-North America re: repression of campus solidarity with the Palestinian people since 7 Oct. 2023

<https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/-/->

[/us https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/-/-/canada](https://mesana.org/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom/-/-/canada)

The British Society for Middle East Studies (BRISMES)

Letters & statements from BRISMES Council re: repression of campus solidarity with Palestine and violations of academic freedom in Palestine, the UK and Europe:

<https://www.brismes.ac.uk/advocacy/advocacy-by-brismes-council>

Letters & statements from BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom re: violations of academic freedom and freedom of speech in the UK, Germany, Israel, Iraq, Iran, The Netherlands, Lebanon, Bahrain:

<https://www.brismes.ac.uk/advocacy/committee-on-academic-freedom>

The Italian Society for Middle East Studies (SeSaMO)

Letters & statements from SeSaMO Committee on Academic Freedom re: repression of campus solidarity with Palestine and violations of academic freedom and freedom of speech in Italy, Israel, Palestine, Egypt:

<https://www.sesamoitalia.it/comitato-per-la-liberta-accademica/>

As you will therefore clearly see, our Committees on Academic Freedom consistently support and defend the rights of academics both within our respective countries and within the Middle East and North Africa. We respectfully repeat our request that you address the content of our letter, which details an extremely concerning pattern of violations of academic freedom in Iran.

We look forward to receiving your reply.

Yours sincerely,

*Nicola Pratt*

*L. E. Dumer*



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**Professor Nicola Pratt**  
BRISMES President

**Professor Rosita Di Peri**  
SeSaMO President

**Professor Ash Ü. Bâli**  
MESA President

**Dr Lewis Turner**  
Chair, BRISMES Committee on Academic Freedom

**Dr Maria Chiara Rioli**  
Chair of SeSaMO Committee on Academic Freedom

**Professor Emerita Laurie Brand**  
Chair of MESA Committee on Academic Freedom

To read previous letters and statements from BRISMES CAF, please visit:  
[Committee on Academic Freedom](#)

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