

## Statement Reaffirming ASA's Commitment to Scholarly Freedom

*March 6, 2020*

As we enter a new decade, the American Sociological Association (ASA) expresses concern about sociologists around the world who continue to face governmental restrictions on their scholarly activity.

ASA has a long history of supporting academic freedom, free speech, and free movement for sociologists, irrespective of the topic of their scholarship. For example, among many other efforts, we voiced concern about Bush administration policies that restricted travel and intellectual exchanges between the U.S. and Cuba, the proposed boycott of Israeli academics and academic institutions, tightened restrictions on international academics who teach at Palestinian institutions of higher education, and the Trump administration's Executive Order regarding entry into the U.S. for people from seven majority Muslim countries. We have advocated for scholars in China and Turkey facing prosecution for exercising their right to freedom of expression, and we have protested against the Hungarian government's decisions to move research institutes under political control and ban gender studies programs.

We engage in this advocacy work through a number of approaches, including public statements and strategic private communications. ASA sometimes works independently, and at other times in collaboration with relevant partners. ASA is a member and active participant in two organizations that specifically address these concerns. Scholars at Risk is an international network of institutions and individuals whose mission it is to protect scholars and promote academic freedom. ASA was a founding member of the Science and Human Rights Coalition, an initiative of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, that established a network of scientific and engineering membership organizations that recognize a role for scientists and engineers in advancing human rights.

Today we reiterate our principles on the importance of scholarly freedom. Scientific progress depends on openness, transparency, and the free flow of ideas and people, and we deplore any restrictions on such activity.

In addition to reiterating our principles, we encourage sociologists to engage in educational activities as teachers and scholars to create critical discussion about these issues from a sociological perspective.