

KIKA-SAR Recommendation for Pre-Session 41  
Universal Periodic Review, UN

# Protecting the Academic Freedom of Indonesia's Higher Education, Scientific and Research Communities

---

HERLAMBANG P. WIRATRAMAN

Indonesian Caucus For Academic Freedom (KIKA), Advisory Board  
Faculty Of Law, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Assistant Professor

# Profiles

---

KIKA is Indonesian Caucus for Academic Freedom, a national coalition of researchers and students who convene to discuss the state of academic freedom and opportunities to support the higher education community.



SAR is Scholars at Risk, an international network of higher education institutions and individuals committed to supporting at-risk scholars and promoting academic freedom around the world, including through advocacy before the UN and other international institutions.



# Challenges and Impacts

---

- The mandate of Presidential Decree No. 78/2021 concerning the National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN) actually shows three dominant characters due to integration, namely bureaucratization, centralization and control, compared to efforts to develop and strengthen research institutions.
- Indonesia's rector appointment system threatens university autonomy by giving the minister of education disproportionate voting power, effectively giving control over major aspects of university policymaking to political actors outside the university.
- The pressures we've seen on higher education during this reporting period are consistent with a decline in academic freedom overall. And indeed, the Academic Freedom Index – which measures the level of academic freedom in countries around the world – confirms that after reforms following the end of the Suharto regime in 1998, protection for academic freedom has declined.
- This is a dangerous trend, and we urge that States intervene to protect and promote academic freedom throughout Indonesia.

# Recommendation

KIKA and SAR urge UN member states to call on Indonesia to

---

- (1) Publicly commit to protecting and promoting academic freedom, university autonomy, and rights that are fundamental to higher education communities, especially freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association;
- (2) Refrain from the use of force or legal actions intended to restrict or punish scholars' and students' exercise of academic freedom and related rights;
- (3) Investigate violations of scholars' and students' academic freedom and related rights, and hold perpetrators accountable;
4. Establish an ombudsperson tasked with receiving and responding to academic freedom concerns at public and private higher education institutions;
5. Revise the ITE Law and Science Law to conform to national and international legal standards and obligations relating to academic freedom and freedom of expression; and
6. Strengthen university autonomy and reduce the risk of corruption in state higher education institutions, including by allowing university senates greater control over rector appointments.