FULL REPORT

1. REPORT ON CASES CONSIDERED

The Academic Committee has considered four cases with concerns over violations of academic freedom, and recommended that the ISA Executive Committee should take action in all four of them. The ISA Executive Committee eventually issued statements on three of these. We discuss each in turn below, in chronological order.

1. Waleed Khalil el-Sayed Salem
   We receive an expression of concern regarding the academic freedom Waleed Khalil el-Sayed Salem, a University of Washington PhD arrested while doing research for his doctoral dissertation in Cairo. There was a clear consensus among the committee members that this constituted a violation of Academic Freedom, and we recommended that the ISA Executive Committee should make a statement. The ISA statement decided to do so, and the final statement is available at https://www.isanet.org/News/ID/5646/ISA-Statement-Regarding-the-Academic-Freedom-of-Waleed-Khalil-el-Sayed-Salem.

2. Ban on gender studies in Hungary
   We received an expression of concern regarding the proposed legislation to ban gender studies in Hungary. There was a general consensus that this would constitute a threat to academic freedom, and that a statement by the ISA conceivably could make a difference and possibly deter the proposed legislation. The ISA Executive Committee decided to issue a statement, and the final statement is available at https://www.isanet.org/News/ID/5650/ISA-Statement-Regarding-Concerns-about-Gender-Studies-Programs-in-Hungary.

3. Academic freedom and travel restrictions in Turkey
   We received an email from a Turkish ISA member who had to withdraw from the 2019 annual meeting as they have been unable to get a passport after the 2016 coup attempt. There was a general consensus among the committee members that there remain severe concerns over academic freedom in Turkey. However, there was some concern over whether it was helpful to issue repeated statements on issues and the consequences of the committee assuming a role that could be seen as monitoring ongoing cases of concern. A majority of the committee members were in favor of the ISA making a renewed expression of concern. The ISA Executive Committee decided to so, and the statement issue is available at https://www.isanet.org/News/ID/5674/ISA-Statement-Regarding-the-On-Going-Academic-Freedom-Concerns-in-Turkey.
4. Matthew Hedges

We received an expression of concern over the academic freedom of Matthew Hedges, a Durham University PhD student who was arrested in the United Arab Emirates while conducting research for his doctoral dissertation, and subsequently given a severe sentence for espionage in a trial with many apparent problems. There was a consensus in the committee that this constituted a clear violation of academic freedom, and we recommended that the ISA Executive Committee should take action. However, Hedges was subsequently pardoned and allowed to return to the UK. The ISA Executive Committee thus decided against taking action, on the grounds that he had been pardoned and a statement under the circumstances could have more negative than positive net effects.

2. Other Issues Brought to the AFC

The ISA Academic Committee has received a number of enquiries that regarding the code of conduct or ISA governance or policies. These issues fall outside the mandate of the committee, and as chair I have responded with some explanation of the mandate and referred these to the ISA Executive Director.

3. Panels Proposed

The AFC has three panel slots for the 2019 conference. We tried to encourage more active engagement from ISA members in the construction of the panels, which we felt was useful and helped generate some proposals. The panels for the 2019 are:

1. WC06: A Global Index on Academic Freedom: Why? How? And Can it Improve Universities?
2. FC23: Academic Freedom and Politics on the Campus