



**Remarks by Mark A. Angelson**

***Launch event of "Education Under Attack 2014," a report of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA)***

**February 27, 2014**

Mr. Mark A. Angelson, Treasurer of the [Institute of International Education \(IIE\)](#) and Chairman of IIE's [Scholar Rescue Fund \(IIE-SRF\)](#), provided a welcome presentation at the occasion of the launch of *Education Under Attack 2014* - a report released by the [Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack \(GCPEA\)](#).

This global study charts the scale and nature of attacks on education; highlights their impact on education – including on students, teachers, scholars, and facilities; and documents the ways that governments, local communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies try to reduce the impact of such violence and prevent future attacks. In doing so, it provides the most extensive documentation of attacks on education to date, including a close examination of attacks on higher education.

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Madame Under-Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict Zerrougui, your Excellencies, distinguished guests: On behalf of our Trustees and staff, welcome to the [Institute of International Education \(IIE\)](#).

In war zones, and in crisis zones under repressive regimes, the international community often thinks first of humanitarian aid, providing food, shelter and medicine to displaced persons and others. Education usually comes last. I often refer in public remarks to IIE President, Dr. Allan Goodman's adage "education is the orphan of every war". How very gratifying it is to be here today in the presence of so many "adoptive parents" of that orphan. Thank you all for standing together against attacks on education and for being here today to launch this important report.

IIE may be best known for administering the Fulbright Scholarships since their creation in 1946, but our nearly 700 dedicated employees currently work on more than 250 other programs from 19 offices around the world. 29,000 participants from 175 countries will benefit from IIE-run

programs this year. 68 alumni of IIE-run programs and IIE Trustees have won the Nobel Prize. That's 68 and counting.

In fact, we are here today on account of an IIE activity that long predates the Fulbright program. Since 1919, IIE has been rescuing scholars from oppression the world over, sometimes one by one and sometimes entire national academies.

We are pleased to have been a founding member of this Coalition and doubly pleased to serve currently on the Coalition's Steering and Management Committees. Protecting education from attack is a collaborative effort and, with all of you, we are proud to be part of these critically important activities.

As I said, IIE has been involved in protecting education during crisis for nearly a century by assisting persecuted and displaced scholars and students. We began by rescuing Russian scholars from the Bolsheviks. Edward R Murrow, before his legendary career in broadcasting, was IIE's assistant director and in that capacity was deeply involved in rescuing European scholars from Nazis and Fascists. We rescued Hungarian scholars and others in the 1950s and 1960s. But we missed some opportunities for rescue, for example during the cultural revolution in China and some of the subsequent genocides in Southeast Asia.



*IIE-SRF Chairman, Mark Angelson, delivers remarks at the February 27, 2014 launch of "Education Under Attack 2014"*

In order to ensure that never would happen again, in 2002 IIE formalized its rescue activity by establishing the [IIE Scholar Rescue Fund](#) (IIE-SRF) so that scholars under threat anywhere in the world always will have a place to turn for support and safe-haven.

IIE-SRF's core work is providing academic fellowships and other support for established scholars whose lives and work are threatened in their home countries. We have the largest and perhaps the only fund in the world dedicated exclusively to rescuing scholars.

In our first 11 years we granted life-saving fellowships to 526 scholars from 50 countries and placed them at havens in 40 countries.

The Coalition's report being released here today highlights attacks on education in 30 countries. Since 2002, we have received more than 4,500 inquiries from academics expressing threats to the fundamental freedom to teach and learn in 103 countries. There is much more work to do.

The SRF-rescued scholars have suffered grave violations of their basic human rights – I am particularly grateful to Ken Roth of Human Rights Watch for making time to be with us today. Our scholars have endured awful and inhumane acts including torture, imprisonment, assassination attempts and the killing of their loved ones.

The two countries where these circumstances have been the most egregious on a large-scale are Iraq and Syria.

For the past seven years, we have dedicated staff members and segregated funds to rescue over 275 scholars from Iraq, finding host institutions for most of them in the MENA region, thus counteracting brain drain there, and adding professional development and e-learning to facilitate the scholars' ultimate repatriation. Our Iraq work has included convening groundbreaking conferences and training workshops in Jordan and in Iraq to help re-build and restore the Iraqi academy. Many Iraqi professors supported by IIE-SRF have been able to return to their country and resume teaching. One of our scholars serves today as the president of a leading university in Iraq.

When I was new to this work nearly a decade ago, I assumed that refugee scholars would be most interested in green cards and starting new lives in the United States. I couldn't have been more wrong. An overwhelming majority of our scholars, when asked "if you could have one wish granted what would it be?" respond by saying "I wish I could go home".

Before we finished dealing with the Iraq situation, the academic emergency that has come with the war in Syria landed on our doorstep. The Scholar Rescue Fund already has awarded fellowships to almost 50 scholars from Syria, and will be considering another 11 cases at our upcoming selection committee meeting.

I am very happy that one of our rescued scholars will be on the panel today to share her story with you and tell us all more about what is happening in Syria. She is a scholar of the arts and was awarded an IIE-SRF fellowship last year, in cooperation with CARA, and now is safely pursuing her scholarship in the UK.

As with our rescued Syrian scholar, we consider that every great mind that we save will have a multiplier effect on the production of knowledge – teaching students, educating the educators, publishing papers, conducting research, attending conferences, and sharing ideas.

We applaud the Coalition -- not only for this ground-breaking edition of “Education Under Attack 2014” but also for bringing together from around the globe important organizations working on this critical issue. We are honored to be part of the Coalition’s work to raise awareness of attacks against education and to advocate measures designed to mitigate and prevent future incidents.

Galileo was a persecuted scholar. He famously said, “Of all the hatreds none is greater than that of ignorance against knowledge.” Well, Galileo must be spinning in his grave and, so long as he is doing so, we will stand with all of you in the fight against attacks on education.

Thank you all very much.

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*The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) is a coalition of organizations that include: the Council for Assisting Refugee Academics (CARA), Human Rights Watch, **the Institute of International Education/IIE’s Scholar Rescue Fund**, Protect Education in Insecurity and Conflict, Save the Children, the Scholars at Risk Network, UNESCO, UNHCR and UNICEF. GCPEA is a project of the Tides Center, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.*