

## **STOP DISCRIMINATION OF IRANIAN STUDENTS STUDYING IN NORWAY**

This Resolution is adopted at the ISU National Assembly - 2014/15 (19<sup>th</sup> October 2014).

In May 2014, three Iranian students at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) were expelled, nine months into their studies. The Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) was behind the decision of expulsion. This comes against the background of PST's interpretation of UN Resolution 1737 on export sanctions against Iran. The reason is a fear that the Iranian students will acquire sensitive information that can be used for development and production of weapons of mass destruction. Below is the view of the director of NTNU's Department of Materials Science, Jostein Mårdalen, who disagrees:

*"The projects have an environmental profile, and is far away from technology that can be used to weapons of mass destruction."*

### **Sanctions**

Norway has, together with other countries signed the UN resolution 1737 on export sanctions against Iran. The sanctions will prevent Iran's contribution to the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction. How these penalties are applied in higher education varies between countries participating in the sanctions. In Norway the sanctions are found in legislation on export control. Education is subject to this legislation in line with technology and products. The interpretation of the sanctions in Norway are severe compared with interpretation in other Western countries.

The Netherlands Supreme Court declared that to refuse Iranian nationals from studying in the Netherlands was unlawful. The interpretation of the sanctions do not oblige states to enforce sanctions on individual citizens from these countries. The Court said that this is against Dutch constitutional and European law, which prohibits discrimination on grounds of nationality, such an interpretation of the sanctions laws were declared invalid.

This ruling has not been considered as violations of sanctions from the UN. Extensive discovery are carried out when it comes to the assessment of the studies considered to be sensitive. There are large differences between countries, and students who are being expelled from one country can often start studying in another.

### **The need for predictability in the treatment of the right to study and residence permits**

ISU believes that the current practice is confusing and discriminatory. Students must be able to expect to complete the studies they have commenced. When the studies are considered to be sensitive and subject to sanctions, this must be disclosed in advance. Furthermore, we believe that higher education institutions are those best qualified to make assessments of the studies' content and its potential applications. Only specific threat or risk related to individuals are reason to depart from these assessments.

### **Free diffusion of knowledge**

ISU believes that knowledge is a public good that should be available to everyone, including globally. Free sharing of knowledge means that people can not be excluded. Knowledge as a common good can not be stolen or otherwise acquired illegally.

Education is not a commodity. ISU is therefore critical that education is subject to export control legislation in line with technology.

**The International Students' Union of Norway believes that:**

- The criteria for a residence permit application to be open and easily accessible.
- academic staff at the institutions are best placed to assess the risk of using and learning about sensitive technology related to their studies. Therefore should do the assessments.
- Knowledge should be freely available to all.
- The current use of UN sanctions in 1737 is muddled and not very transparent, and leads to discrimination on grounds of nationality.
- ISU expresses their support for the Iranian students in the appeal process.

About ISU:

The International Students' Union of Norway (ISU) is an organisation for student democracy at Norwegian higher educational institutions. All international students studying in Norway are members of the student organisation. ISU works on students' academic, social and economic rights. More information about the organisation can be found at [www.isu-norway.no](http://www.isu-norway.no)

