

16 November 2022**HRK General Assembly condemns violence against university members in Iran**

At its meeting in Jena yesterday, the General Assembly of the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) expressed its dismay at the continued state violence in Iran against peacefully protesting citizens, including many students and academics. The assembly of German university leaders declared its solidarity with Iranian university members and with citizens demonstrating for human rights and explicitly also for women's rights and equality in Iran. It appealed to the Iranian leadership to immediately refrain from the use of violence, to seek dialogue and unconditionally to respect freedom of expression and academic freedom.

In the wake of the nationwide demonstrations for the respect of human rights, strikes and protests have taken place at numerous Iranian universities in recent weeks, for example at the University of Tehran, Amirkabir University of Technology, Sharif University of Technology and Islamic Azad University. Although in Iran the campus of a university is under special protection by law, police and other security forces have repeatedly used violence against peacefully protesting university members, and university campuses have sometimes been stormed. Other reported incidents include arrests of numerous students by armed security forces in civilian clothes and attacks by Basij militias on various universities, including the University of Sistan and Baluchestan in the Sunni south-east and the University of Kurdistan in the north-west of the country.

"Freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and academic freedom are being violated to a significant extent in Iran. We condemn the massive violence that is being used, in particular against university members who are concerned about the present and future of their country," said HRK President Prof Dr Peter-André Alt. "At the same time, I would like to express my thanks for the solidarity being shown to students and researchers from Iran at German universities. Iranian students make up the fourth largest group of international students from outside Europe in this country. Their concern for relatives and acquaintances in Iran is great."

Scholars at Risk (SaR), the international network for the protection of academics at risk, is also deeply concerned about the excessive violence, especially against Iranian students, teaching staff and researchers. SaR is calling for support for Iranian students and scholars through admission agreements and in the struggle for academic freedom.