

OVER 70 ARTISTS IMPRISONED WITH MORE THAN 20% ON TERRORISM CHARGES AS FAR-RIGHT AND NATIONALIST POLITICS GROWS ACROSS THE WORLD

State of Artistic Freedom Report 2020 launched during World Art Day Digital Seminar

9.00-11.00 CEST, 15 April 2020

Wednesday 8 April 2020: On Wednesday 15 April, Freemuse will launch the State of Artistic Freedom Report 2020 at a digital seminar co-hosted with the Swedish National Commission for UNESCO, Konstnärernas Riksorganisation and the Swedish Arts Council. The report examines 711 acts of violations of artistic freedom in 2019 in 93 countries. It shows widespread attacks on freedom of artistic expression on a global scale as practices of censoring artists' voices continue.

As the world shifts into isolation and government's enact state of emergency procedures, this marks a critical axis for the state of artistic freedom. The report and event will explore the critical climate for artistic freedom as global nationalist populism continues to restrict expression.

"Freedom of artistic expression is protected as long as it fits dominating narratives; politically, religiously and digitally," said Dr Srirak Plipat, Freemuse Executive Director, "This report shows that the west is losing its leading position as human rights and freedom defenders at a fast pace, while the world grows intolerant and violent against non-mainstream views and expression."

Freemuse research notes the damning effect of nationalist, populist politics as already leading to increased restrictions on artistic expressions, with a marked deterioration in countries where this right has traditionally been protected.

In 2019, Freemuse documented that 42% of all imprisonments of artists concerned criticising the government, with Europe the highest offender for imprisonments related to artistic expressions (42%). Governments were again responsible for 55% of all acts of censorship, affecting 847 artists and artworks. Politics was also the key issue behind the detention of artists, with 56% of artists detained on these grounds. Music remains the most frequently targeted art form at 32%, but visual art closely followed at 26%.

The state of artistic freedom is in a critical state. On World Art Day, the public is invited to join a digital seminar on the state of artistic freedom, key challenges and recommendations for change.

The seminar will feature:

- **Keynote addresses** from
 - Amanda Lind, Minister for Culture and Democracy, Sweden
 - Hilde Klemetsdal, Director for Human Rights, Democracy and Gender Equality in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 - and Svante Weyler, Head of Board, Swedish Arts Council
 - Géraldine Zeuner, Head of Culture and Development, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
- **A feature presentation** of the State of Artistic Freedom 2020 report by
 - Dr Srirak Plipat, Freemuse Executive Director.
- **A panel discussion** with
 - Sara Edström, Artist and Chair of Konstnärernas Riksorganisation
 - Staffan Smedby, Head of Unit for Democracy and Human Rights, SIDA
 - Brittis Edman, Head of Policy at Amnesty International Sweden
 - Nora Al Badri, visual/media artist
- **A musical performance** by Jennie Abrahamsson

Register online: <https://bit.ly/39OrWPI>

Post your questions on Twitter throughout the event at **#artisticfreedomSAF20**

The report will be available online: freemuse.org/the-state-of-artistic-freedom-2020

For media inquiries please contact:

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About Freemuse

Freemuse is an independent international organisation advocating for and defending freedom of artistic expression. We believe that at the heart of violations of artistic freedom is the effort to silence opposing or less preferred views and values by those in power—politically, religiously or societally—mostly due to fear of their transformative effect. Our work includes monitoring and documenting violations of artistic freedom, as well as exposing laws and policies that enable and sustain these violations. Freemuse's approach is human rights-based and provides an international legal framework, as well as lays out the principles, for accountability, equality, non-discrimination and participation.

Swedish National Commission for UNESCO,

The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO is seated within the Swedish Ministry of Education and Research. The members of the Commission are appointed by the Government for a period of four years. The Swedish National Commission for UNESCO provides advice to the Swedish Government on UNESCO-related matters and raises awareness in Sweden about UNESCO and its work.

About Konstnärernas Riksorganisation

Swedish Artists' Association is an organization for professional visual artists, craftsmen and designers. The organization's task is to represent artists in political issues concerning art and to strengthen artists' financial and social situation. Swedish Artists' Association has made a lot of political progress and gains for better conditions since the start 1937. But there is still a lot of challenges to deal with. The Swedish Artists' Association is active both locally and regionally, as well as nationally and internationally.

The Swedish Arts Council

The Swedish Arts Council is a government authority whose principal task is to implement national cultural policy. Culture is to be a dynamic, challenging and independent force based on the freedom of expression. Everyone should be given the opportunity to participate in cultural life. Allocations from Swedish Arts Council provide funding for a variety of activities within arts and culture. Through our support schemes and other initiatives, we contribute to fulfill the Swedish cultural policy objectives. The aim is to guarantee a vibrant and diverse arts and cultural sector.

The Swedish Arts Council is also national contact point for the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. We cooperate to protect and promote artistic freedom on a national as well as on a global level. We also have a specific mission to promote the role of culture for freedom of expression and democratisation in international contexts, and to create synergies between cultural policy and international development cooperation. The Swedish Arts Council also work to promote cities of refuge for artists at risk in Sweden.