

## 2021 Oak Fellow

The 2021 Oak Human Rights Fellow, Olga Sadovskaya, is a Russian human rights lawyer working as the vice chair of the Committee Against Torture, the largest and most notable anti-torture organization in Russia, which she and three other activists launched in 2000.

For the last 13 years, Olga Sadovskaya has served as the Deputy Head of the organization, during which time she and her colleagues have built a dedicated team that has won many international awards, including the PACE Prize of the Council of Europe and Martin Ennals Award Frontline Defenders Human Rights Award. Sadovskaya, individually, has received the Andrey Sakharov Freedom Award and was included in the shortlist for Nobel Peace Prize in 2017.

After years of experience with torture cases, Sadovskaya and her team have written and published a methodology for public investigation, which is now widely used by human rights organizations in Russia and the former Soviet Union. Olga has personally represented more than 300 victims of torture before the European Court of Justice, two of which have been included in the list of 20 most important cases that changed Russia.

Sadovskaya hopes to use the Oak Human Rights Fellowship as respite so that she can continue her work in Russia, as well as an opportunity to connect with Colby students and raise awareness on issues of torture and incarceration in Russia and around the world.



2021 Oak Human Rights Fellow Olga Sadovskaya

## Previous Oak Fellows

**2020:** [Nasim Lomani](#), is a human rights defender and migrants' rights activist, who has been working in Greece and across the EU for over a decade. Lomani, together with others in solidarity, founded and served as one of the key organizers of City Plaza – Refugees Accommodation Solidarity Space in Athens.

**Spring 2020:** [Venuste](#), is a water rights activist who cofounded International Transformation Foundation (ITF)—a youth-led NGO in Kenya and Rwanda providing programs to facilitate communities' development.

**2019:** [Jamila Bargach](#), is an activist and scholar who has dedicated her life to serving under-resourced communities in southwest Morocco and creating sustainable initiatives through education and scientific innovation. She is cofounder of Dar Si Hmad, which operates the world's largest functioning fog collection project.

**2018:** [Bassam Khabieh](#), freelance photojournalist and activist, has documented war crimes and other ongoing human rights violations in the Syrian conflict. His photographs have been featured by organizations such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization, Reuters, and The Atlantic.

**2017:** [Jinyan Zeng](#) is a Chinese filmmaker, blogger, activist, and scholar. Zeng has spent 20 years fighting for people with HIV-AIDS, women facing discrimination, factory workers suffering exploitation, a natural environment threatened by pollution, and political dissidents experiencing repression.

**2016:** [Khalid Albaih](#) is a political cartoonist who comments on important causes like freedom of expression and democracy in the Arab world, Islamophobia in the West, and the use of torture and predator drone attacks.



2016 Oak Fellow  
Khalid Albaih



2017 Oak Fellow  
Jinyan Zeng

## What We Do

The Oak Institute for Human Rights, established in 1997 by a generous grant from the Oak Foundation, champions the struggles for dignity, freedom, and justice for people throughout the world. Each fall the institute hosts a front-line human rights activist operating in difficult or dangerous circumstances as the Oak Human Rights Fellow. The fellow teaches, relaxes, and thinks while residing at the College. Lectures and other events are organized with the Oak Student Committee to educate the campus and extended community about the fellow's area of expertise and to encourage participation in research, internships, and activism on behalf of human rights. The institute also provides internship grants and research opportunities to students.



Students with 2018 Oak Human Rights Fellow Bassam Khabieh

# Colby

## Application Information

For more information, contact  
Oak Institute for Human Rights

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# Colby



## Oak Human Rights Fellowship



## The Oak Fellowship

The Oak Fellowship annually offers an opportunity for one prominent human rights activist to take a leave from frontline work and spend the fall semester (end of August through mid-December) in residence at Colby. This provides the fellow with time for respite, reflection, research, and writing. Following the period of the award, the fellow is expected to return home to continue their work in human rights.

The Oak Fellow's responsibilities include regular meetings with students through a small seminar class and informal discussion groups. Additionally, the fellow works with Colby's faculty to share a lecture series or symposium on their human rights interests. The fellow participates in intellectual life on campus, providing Colby students the opportunity to work with an internationally recognized human rights activist.

In addition to a \$36,000 stipend, the fellowship includes health benefits, housing, a campus meal plan, and transportation. The fellowship also provides an office, access to the College's computer and library resources, a student assistant to help with the seminar and research, and secretarial support. To ensure that the fellow fully benefits from the extended respite and safety of the fellowship experience, the program is designed to allow dependent family members to join the fellow in

residence at Colby. A limited budget is allocated to help offset the cost of transportation, housing, and meals for family members who accompany the fellow.

Eligibility for the Oak Fellowship is restricted to those whose work takes place primarily outside the United States. Selection criteria include achievements in the struggle for human rights, the need for respite and relief from danger, and the ability to contribute to the Colby community.



Members of the Colby community attend an immersive presentation of refugee boats crossing the Mediterranean.

## 2022: Indigenous Rights

The Oak Institute for Human Rights at Colby College is pleased to issue this call for nominations and applications for the 2022 Oak Fellowship. The 2022-23 theme is Indigenous Rights.

Indigenous people and their communities strive for political and cultural sovereignty and the ability to continue their livelihood, traditions, and culture on their ancestral lands. Around the globe, colonialism and the formation of modern nation-state borders have violated Indigenous people's human rights and displaced communities. Capitalist ventures contribute to ecological exploitation that threatens Indigenous ecosystems and hastens premature death. This fellowship seeks to support fights for Indigenous sovereignty and oppose the unjust treatment of Indigenous peoples. The fellow's work should focus on exposing and organizing against human rights violations, such as policies of forced assimilation, criminalization of protest, the disappearance of Indigenous rights defenders, and militarization on Indigenous lands. Applications are due in full no later than December 30, 2021.

## About Colby

Colby College, founded in 1813, is one of America's outstanding and most prestigious liberal arts colleges, offering a rigorous academic program that fosters transformational relationships between students and faculty. Located on one of the most beautiful campuses in the nation, Colby overlooks a small New England town in Maine's Kennebec River valley. The College enrolls 2,000 undergraduate students and has 225 faculty members.

Journalist Alia Malek, second from left, following a Oak lecture in 2018.

## Application Information

Nominations for the 2022 Oak Fellowship should be sent to:

Valérie Dionne, Oak Director and Associate Professor of French  
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Colby College  
4650 Mayflower Hill  
Waterville, Maine 04901 U.S.A.

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More information and application forms are available at [colby.edu/oak](http://colby.edu/oak).

Completed applications must arrive no later than Dec. 30, 2021.

The selection of the 2022 Oak Fellow will be announced by April 30, 2022.