

Turkey: Urgent Call for Solidarity! - Members of “Academics for Peace” subject to persecution

Tuesday 6 September 2016, by [Academics for Peace](#) (Date first published: 4 September 2016).

Members of “Academics for Peace” and Education and Science Workers Union (Eğitim-SEN) have been removed from their positions in public higher education institutions permanently!

In January 2016, 2,218 scholars from Turkey signed a petition titled “We will not be a party to this crime,” also known as the Peace Petition. Since then the signatories (“Academics for Peace”) have been subject to heavy pressure and persecution. Hundreds of them have faced criminal and disciplinary investigations, custody, imprisonment, or violent threats. Several academics have been dismissed or suspended, some were forced to resign or leave the country.

Turkey experienced a failed coup attempt on July 15, 2016, and the Turkish government holds the religious group led by the US resident cleric Fethullah Gülen responsible. After the coup attempt, the Government and university administrations have continued targeting the Academics for Peace with the pretext of purging Gülen affiliated individuals from public service.

The latest mass purge came late at night on Thursday, September 1, 2016 via a cabinet decree within the context of the state of emergency rule. More than 41 Peace Petition signatories were deemed “supporters of terrorism” and banned from public service, alongside more than 40,000 public service employees. Note that many of the signatories have already been under administrative investigations for signing the Peace Petition for months, without a conclusion. The dismissal of the signatories overnight with a fait accompli of a State of Emergency decree is a serious violation of their basic human right to fair trial and due process. Dismissed under the conditions of state of emergency, they will neither be able to appeal the decision nor work in public sector for a lifetime; their passports will also be revoked.

This latest attempt to purge Academics for Peace by linking them to coup plotters is outrageous and unacceptable. Government of Turkey is taking advantage of the State of Emergency rule to crack down all critical voices, including those who have no relation to the Gülen organization or the coup attempt. We urgently demand that our colleagues get reinstated to their positions and have their employee rights fully restored.

Please disseminate our call for solidarity in your networks. Ask your college, university, professional organization, or union to publish a statement in support of academics in Turkey, and send it to government and university officials in Turkey.

Academics for Peace

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