



Declaration by the Society for Turkic, Ottoman and Turkish Studies (GTOT)

Academic Freedom in Turkey

The Society for Turkic, Ottoman and Turkish Studies (GTOT), an academic disciplinary society and representative institution, is highly worried about the repressions to which over 2.000 colleagues in Turkey are subjected due to their support for a petition calling for peace in Southeast Anatolia.

The freedoms of thought and opinion are not only the basis of every democratic society but also of all academic activity. This includes the inalienable right to criticize government policies. In its constitution, by signing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, through its membership in the Council of Europe, and by virtue of its application for membership in the European Union, Turkey and its government have explicitly and publicly declared their support for these rights.

Regardless of the contents of the petition for peace, we regard the rigid course of action against these academics by the Turkish Judiciary, the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), and some university administrations as contradictory to international norms and values. Among the signatories of the petition are academics of high international standing and many junior scientists with an international educational background, constituting a considerable proportion of the current and future academic elite of Turkey.

Especially as friends of Turkey, we call on the Turkish government to recognize the important role of academia in the formation of public opinion, to consider it as an expression of the lively democracy in Turkey, and to conduct the public debate based on arguments, not repression. GTOT e.V. will directly and through European academic societies and university administrations attempt to facilitate a dialogue with the Turkish institutions and universities concerned in order to achieve a moderating effect and to strengthen the acceptance of freedom of thought and academic freedom in Turkey.

GTOT e.V.

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