

Repression against scholars in Turkey
ISA47 statement, 17.03.2016

Dear colleagues,

2016 is a frightening year for freedom, peace and social sciences.

As I wrote you 5 weeks ago, instead of diffusing researchers' work and publications, the role of an ISA Research Committee on social movements has suddenly become diffusing information on threats, imprisonments and now torture and assassination of our colleagues.

Things have only got worst ever since. The torture and murder of our colleague Giulio Regeni was a major alarm. Last week, we gathered hundreds of signatures to denounce the murder of activist Bertha Caceres and the threats to our colleague Gustavo Castro in Honduras.

This week, the Turkish government has jailed three of our colleagues from "Academics for Peace", while the European Union negotiates with and support authoritarian and repressive governments.

Please read below the statement issued today by the Turkish committee "Academics for Peace". Here is a link with a petition started by colleagues in the UK:

<https://www.change.org/p/international-community-and-elected-representatives-stop-the-persecution-of-academics-for-peace-in-turkey>

Researchers who work on and with activists and social movements are particularly at threat. The succession of the repression and violence against our colleagues in different countries demands urgent reactions by the academic community. We need to take concrete actions with four aims:

- It is urgent to take action where we are to denounce each case of repression and threat against our researchers, scholars and students.
- We have to offer concrete support to our colleagues victims of repression and violence.
- We also have to organize ourselves to be able to react faster and more efficiently to denounce repression and violence and to protect our colleagues and stand with them to oppose the repression they suffer and defend academic freedom.
- Social sciences and research on and with social movements is more necessary and important than ever. We need to analyse the local, national and international forces, supports and mechanisms that have made peaceful activists and social scientists have become targets of repressive regimes. We particularly welcome articles on these topics on our platform "Open Movements" (www.opendemocracy.net/openmovements).

ISA47 mailing list and Facebook page will welcome your ideas and proposals about concrete actions, analyses and other suggestions.

We ask the ISA to issue a clear statement to denounce the repression against the repression against Turkish scholars.

We demand truth and justice for Giulio Regeni and the liberation of Gustavo Castro in Honduras and Esra Mungan, Kivanç Ersoy and Muzaffer Kaya in Turkey.

For the ISA47 board,
Geoffrey Pleyers
University of Louvain, President of the ISA47 "Social Movements"

Academics for Peace, Turkey, 16.03.2016

Since the announcement of the declaration "*We will not be a party to this crime*" by the Academics for Peace, more than 60 people have been killed in two bombings at the heart of the capital of Turkey, Ankara. Meanwhile, under the name of military operations against the PKK, the state forces have killed hundreds of civilians in the southern part of the country and many more have been injured and forced to leave their homes.

Still, the academics persist in their call for peace while being repressed in various ways.

On March 14, a warrant was issued for the arrest of four academics who made a press declaration (dated, March 10) about the various consequences of oppressive acts carried out by the government since January 11 against the Academics for Peace. The academics Esra Mungan, Kıvanç Ersoy, Muzaffer Kaya and Meral Camcı, having read the text in the name of Academics for Peace - İstanbul, stated that many of the signatories were and are being dismissed from their universities, threatened to death, targeted through media, and that a judicial process would be launched against all of them. They also announced that they stood behind their declaration entitled "We will not be a party to this crime."

Three of the four academics, Esra Mungan, Kıvanç Ersoy and Muzaffer Kaya, were taken under custody on March 14. Meral Camcı is abroad, and thus she was not. These three academics have been indicted for "promoting terrorist organization, acting upon the instructions of the organization," and taken to the court on March 15. Upon the demand of the persecutor, they were sent to the court with a claim for arrest, and eventually, the court decided for arrest.

Moreover, Chris Stephenson, an academic at İstanbul Bilgi

University, present at the court house for solidarity with those three, was taken under custody for carrying a notice of People's Democratic Party (HDP) calling for Newroz celebrations. He is kept under custody on March 15 and deported on March 16. Stephenson, who is married with a Turkish national and have a 13 year old daughter told to Associated Press that there was "no offence, no trial, just an administrative decision to deport me after 25 years of residency in Turkey"

As warfare has escalated in the southern part of Turkey and spread to the other regions, calls for peace have been increasingly suppressed by the state. The pressure on the Academics for Peace is a clear indicator of the expanding pressure on opposition, which often results in serious human rights violations against oppositional voices.

We would like to inform you about the current developments in Turkey, and raise an urgent call for solidarity with the Academics for Peace against the oppression of the state, and we want the grounds for peace to be re-established before more killings take place in the country.