



**TURKISH
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**

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February 22, 2017

Prof. Telmo Mourinho Baptista,

EFPA, President

Dear Prof. Dear Prof. Telmo Mourinho Baptista,

On behalf of Turkish Psychological Association (TPA), I would like to call EFPA to support academics in Turkey who face a serious threat to the existence of academia and academic freedom in our country.

The Turkish government declared a three-month state of emergency after the attempted coup d'état on 15th of July 2016, which has since been extended twice. The government claims that the aim of the state of emergency is safeguarding democracy, freedoms, and the rule of law; yet it has been passed beyond these claims. Almost 20 state of emergency decrees have been issued and over a hundred thousand of civil servants have been purged, included 4,811 academics.

It is clear that TPA *does not* defend and call for international support for those who have been purged because of their relations with the coup attempt. On the other hand, some of these academics were purged just because of their signature about peace, related on the south eastern part of Turkey. Moreover, 15 universities were shut down and academics in those universities also lost their jobs without investigation their relations with the coup attempt.

Many international associations have expressed their concerns regarding the deterioration of academic freedom in Turkey. However, we believe that we have now passed beyond the point where we can simply express our sympathies or concerns for academic freedom in Turkey. It is time to show international solidarity with our colleagues and/or organization members who are facing threats, including and beyond that of the loss of academic freedom.

We are also writing this letter to let you know that the situation has been getting worse for our discipline in Turkey. A new state of emergency decree was issued late on Feb. 7, 2017, which resulted in a total of 330 academics being purged from universities across the country. Among them are 13 psychologists who have just recently lost their jobs, including early career scholars and senior researchers. Though we can not mention each of those who lost their jobs or are in danger of losing their jobs in here, all of them are honourable and succesful members of psychological society in Turkey and many of them are just in their early career stages.

Under the described circumstances, we call EFPA to show solidarity with our colleagues in this time of increasing threat to academic freedom. It is not acceptable for academics to be taken away from their students and universities. It is not acceptable that psychologists fear expressing their study results and ideas through channels ranging from academic papers and presentations to traditional

or social media. Your solidarity with the psychologists influenced by the increasing oppression against academics in Turkey is precious.

As the Turkish Psychological Association, we are working hard to protect our members, academics, and academic freedom in Turkey. We have been taking legal actions, and giving free legal counseling. However, we are afraid that without your solidarity, our efforts will not be enough to protect academic freedom and integrity from increasing governmental oppressions. We call on you to show solidarity with us and all psychologists in Turkey to preserve academic freedom; and to help your colleagues who have been harmed economically, socially, and psychologically by this unacceptable process.

Possible actions for your organisation to support us include but are not limited to:

- Commissioning member associations, universities and diplomatic relations to prepare short-term work possibilities, research grants or research asylums abroad to help psychologists to continue their academic work.
- Providing small to mid-scale research funds to help the psychologists who have been banned from leaving the country, so they will be able to pursue their research in the country and sustain their livelihoods.
- Sharing daily/weekly social media reports on developments related to the state of emergency in Turkey.

We keep our hopes that academics all around the world will show solidarity with us. We also hold that this will be a step toward building international solidarity networks for psychologists in Turkey as well as in other countries where academic freedom is under threat. We believe that your organisation will have a key role in building this international solidarity. Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information if necessary.

With my kindest regards,



Professor Gonca SOYGÜT
TPA, President

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