

International Association of Health Policies (IAHP)—Call for Solidarity

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journals.sagepub.com/home/ijoh**Mauricio Torres-Tovar¹**

The International Association of Health Policies (IAHP) stands in support of two of their board members of the European region and members of “Academics for Peace” and Education and Science Workers Union (Eğitim-SEN), who were discharged from their positions at public higher institutions in Turkey!

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. In the aftermath of the failed coup the Government and university administrations have ordered for the dismissal of 42,881 state employees, especially in the Ministry of Education, but also at universities, where 2,346 employees were discharged. The latest mass purge imposed on the basis of a cabinet decree within the context of the state of emergency rule (September 1, 2016), included more than 41 Peace Petition signatories that were deemed “supporters of terrorism” and banned from public service.

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, which demanded Turkey’s state to abandon its deliberate massacre and deportation of Kurdish and other peoples in the region. Since then the signatories (“Academics for Peace”) have been subject to heavy pressure and persecution and have faced criminal and disciplinary investigations, custody, imprisonment, or violent threats.

The dismissal of the 41 Peace Petition signatories and Education and Science Workers Union (Eğitim-SEN) members in the latest mass purge, among them

¹Alabama, USA

Corresponding Author:

Mauricio Torres-Tovar, President of International Association of Health Policies, National University of Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia.

Email: mhtorrest@unal.edu.co

the International Association of Health Policies (IAHPE) board members ONUR HAZAOGLU and ÖZLEM ÖZKAN, is yet another demonstration of the rapid escalation of violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Turkey, where the failed coup attempt has served as a pretext for the Erdogan government to cleanse all critical voices, both political opponents and human rights defenders.

The IAHP strongly condemns the dismissal of two of its board members, ONUR HAZAOGLU and ÖZLEM ÖZKA, and urgently demand that our colleagues get reinstated to their positions and have their employee rights fully restored.

Most recently the IAHP wrote another message in the same direction: The Turkish government has dismissed dozens of academics from universities that are struggling for peace in their country. For us, academics and health workers in Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa it is unacceptable that, because they have expressed opinions in favor of a pacific conflict solution in their country, they are harassed and repressed being fired. Furthermore, as in the case of Feride Aksu, prevented from leaving the country to assist to academic meetings in her condition of president of International Association of Health Policy-Europe. We demand the Turkish government to reinstate the dismissed academics and we exhort United Nations to intervene in defense of human rights of this group of academics.

Mauricio Torres-Tovar

On behalf of IHAP