

## Statement of Solidarity with Turkish Faculty and Students

The Organizing Committee of the Graduate Workers of Columbia University – UAW Local 2110 severely condemns the Turkish government’s continued assault on dissenting voices amongst Turkish faculty and students, and stand in solidarity with the signatories of the January 2016 Peace Petition now facing a fresh round of criminal indictments. Recasting a call for peace as an endorsement of terrorism is an egregious attempt to silence criticism, and the power of the state must not be brought to bear against the right of academics to express their critical dissent. We call for the termination of the trials and the reinstatement of academics to their university positions. We echo the call from our colleagues in Turkey for academics and trade unionists to show their solidarity by joining delegations to Turkey as international observers at the trials and by sending financial support.

In January 2016 1128 academics signed a Peace Petition titled “We Will not be a Party to this Crime,” demanding an end to the Turkish Government’s violations of human rights in the Kurdish provinces of Turkey. They demanded that the state’s military assault, deportation, and curfew on the movement of its own citizens be ceased, access to the targeted areas be granted to independent national and international observers, and negotiations for lasting peace be resumed that would include the demands of the Kurdish political movement. Since then, the signatories of this peace statement have come under a sustained attack from the state including investigation, imprisonment, solitary confinement, dismissal from service of professors, and expulsion of students.

Most recently, several signatories of the petition have been sued at the Istanbul High Criminal Court for allegedly producing and disseminating “terrorist propaganda.” If convicted these academics face up to 7 and a half years of imprisonment. So far charges have been filed against at least one tenth of the signatories. The indictments are being brought against the academics on an individual basis by the Istanbul Public Chief Prosecutor’s Office, and the court hearings are distributed over several months, so as to preempt an united resistance.

The Turkish government’s gross violation of human rights stands as a particularly egregious instance of increasing governmental and institutional attacks on academic freedom across the globe. As members of a diverse and international intellectual community that thrives on cultivating critical thought and debate, we stand in solidarity with the signatories of the Peace Petition against this ominous and ongoing assault on the right to question and dissent.

Donations to Academics for Peace can be made here:

<https://www.youcaring.com/academicsforpeaceinturkey-763983>

For information about solidarity delegations to Turkey, organized by Academics for Peace, contact:

[info@barisicinakademisyenler.net](mailto:info@barisicinakademisyenler.net)

**Graduate Workers of Columbia – UAW Local 2110, Organizing Committee**

