



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK OF ACADEMIES AND SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES

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The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies (H.R. Network) supports and defends the fundamental human rights of fellow academics worldwide. We, members of the H.R. Network's Executive Committee, have closely followed events in Turkey following the attempted military coup on July 15 and are deeply concerned about the increasingly repressive measures being taken against Turkish academics.

In the days since the attempted coup, the travel of academics has been restricted, Turkish academics abroad have been instructed to return to Turkey, more than 1,500 deans at universities throughout the country have been asked to tender their resignations, and hundreds of academics have been suspended from their posts. These actions have taken place against the backdrop of a wider societal crackdown, which has included mass arrests, suspensions, and dismissals from state institutions. Reports indicate that, already, tens of thousands of such actions have taken place.

The protection of national security is unquestionably a legitimate objective, but it should not be achieved at the expense of fundamental human rights or through sweeping attacks on the principle of academic freedom. Turkish authorities have formally declared a three-month state of emergency, which may allow Turkey to derogate from certain of its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) during the emergency period. However, Turkey remains obligated under the ECHR to ensure that any restrictions placed on individual rights are both "strictly required by the exigencies of the situation" and proportionate.

We ask the government of Turkey to ensure that all measures taken in the interest of security are consistent with Turkey's obligations under international human rights law. This action would represent an important demonstration of the Turkish government's commitment to human rights and academic freedom principles notwithstanding the events of July 15.

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Academies in the Network support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

(The U.S. National Academies, non-profit, non-governmental honorary societies, host the Network secretariat.)

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