



In 2016, NWSA issued a statement in support of the more than 2200 Turkish academics who signed a major [petition against state violence](#). Some of those academics are now being formally prosecuted and sentenced. These include Ayşe Gül Altınay, the Director of Gender and Women's Studies at Sabanci University, who has been sentenced to two years and one month in prison. Dr. Altınay—who has devoted her decades-long career to researching and explaining the effects of violence on women, veterans, and migrants--has decided to remain in Turkey, and to allow her case to be widely publicized in hopes of attracting international attention. To learn more, read the [statement](#) she presented at her second of four trials. We decry the persecution of Dr. Altınay and her colleagues, and are dismayed that NWSA's earlier statement remains relevant in 2019.

EC Letter in Support of Academics in/from Turkey

December 21, 2016

Dear Colleagues:

As members of the Executive Committee of the National Women's Studies Association, we write to express our deep concern over the alarming, ongoing, and unprecedented attacks on academics in/from Turkey.

Concerns about academic freedom have been mounting over the last year as academics in/from Turkey have been retaliated against by the government for signing a petition. The "peace petition," as it was colloquially called, called for resuming recently halted peace negotiations between the Turkish state and the Kurdish guerilla organization, the PKK. The petition included over two thousand signatories, including internationally renowned feminist scholars. In January 2016, the Turkish president called the signatories "traitors," which ignited a witch-hunt, including publishing the names and photos of signatories, marking signatories' office doors with red paint crosses, widespread institutional disciplinary investigations, suspensions, dismissals, and blacklistings, a mass criminal prosecution of all signatories with accusations of "terrorist propaganda," house raids, detentions, and arrests.

Attacks on academics have escalated alarmingly in the context of the government's increasing authoritarianism under emergency rule, declared after the coup attempt in July 2016. For instance, the government has demanded that all university deans and presidents resign, transferred the authority to appoint university presidents directly to Turkey's president, cancelled faculty elections, closed various private universities and schools, suspended or dismissed tens of thousands of academics and teachers, and restricted academics' international travel. The scale of targeted individuals and institutions is distressing. Freedom of expression has been gravely undermined, with hundreds of media outlets banned, more than 130 journalists in prison, hundreds of civil society organizations closed, and parliamentarians from opposing parties arrested. Feminists and LGBTIQ activists are alarmed about the deteriorating political climate and the increased vulnerabilities posed for women and gender nonconforming individuals.

The National Women's Studies Association condemns these attacks on academic freedom and autonomy and calls for solidarity with academics in/from Turkey.



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To learn more, please click [here](#).