Committee of Concerned Scientists

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November 7, 2019

Mr. Abdulhamit Gul
Minister of Justice
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Dear Minister Gul:

The Committee of Concerned Scientists is an independent organization of scientists, physicians, engineers and scholars devoted to the protection and advancement of human rights and scientific freedom for our colleagues all over the world.

We write to express our concern for 17 successful scholars from Meliksah University, who were arrested in August 2016 on the charges of being a member of an armed terrorist organization, opposition to the law on the prevention of financing of terrorism, and/or using Bylock. On March 21, 2018 the court sentenced these scholars to 6 to 11 years in prison. We are concerned that the basis for the charges and the accusation is, in reality, based solely on the fact that Meliksah University was one of the 15 universities closed after the failed coup of July 2016. We are concerned about the arbitrary prosecution and imprisonment of university personnel as a part of sweeping actions taken by the State against higher education community members.

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As a member of the Council of Europe and having been a signatory to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Turkey is required to defend the rights to freedom of expression and association, rights which are also guaranteed in the Turkish Constitution. Prosecuting an individual simply for having worked at Meliksah University is clearly at odds with these principles.

We urge that the charges against our colleagues, Prof. Mahmut Dursun Mat, Prof. Bilal Vatansever, Prof. Murat Sen, Prof. Huseyin Kalyoncu, Prof. Ahmet Uyar, Prof. Mustafa Yuzukirmizi, Prof. Hayrettin Eren, Prof. Dogan Bulut, Prof. Onur Genc, Prof. Halit Akturk, Prof. Emin Emirza, Prof. Mustafa Yilmaz, Prof. Metin Mete Ozbilen, Nihat Koroglu, Mustafa Unalmis, Prof. Kanber Sedef, and Veli Demirci that their convictions and sentences be dismissed.

We thank you for your attention to this most serious matter, and we look forward to receiving your response.

Sincerely,

Joel L. Lebowitz, Paul H. Plotz, Walter Reich, Eugene M. Chudnovsky, Alexander Greer

Joel L. Lebowitz, Paul H. Plotz, Walter Reich, Eugene M. Chudnovsky, Alexander Greer
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