

TURKEY: Repression against teachers

HRWF (19.09.2016) – On 15 July, a bloody coup attempt which resulted in more than 200 dead, hundreds of injured people and thousands of arrests took place in Turkey. Those responsible for unlawful killings and other human rights abuses must be brought to justice while respecting the rule of law but indiscriminate mass arrests and dismissals of thousands of judges, policemen, journalists, teachers and civil society activists are deeply worrying in a context of increasing repression of peaceful dissent on the part of the Turkish government.

In the last few weeks, our NGO has received calls for help from individuals in Turkey that we want to share with you. All names have been omitted to protect the identities of contributors to this article.

Arrested and jailed

Since the 15th of July, after the so-called coup attempt, Turkey has witnessed very dramatic troubles. This chaotic situation unfortunately still goes on incrementally, as you can easily observe during your visit, if you are allowed to visit one of the victims. My husband is in prison in TOKAT jail where he is detained and tortured badly. The place where my husband is in prison has severe conditions, no human can live there.

Without a doubt, you can be sure that Turkish authorities will certainly hide all cases of torture and harassment that they have done to the victims, of whom nobody has any criminal case.

My husband served as a Turkish teacher at a school for about

10 years. All the citizens, parents in our city, and students have known that very well. He dedicated all his life to his job. Although he has no relation with the coup attempt or any so-called terrorist group, he was detained at home, while our two children were crying, by a very crowded and unhuman, ill-tempered police. Most of them had masks on their faces.

During custody and the following process, we haven't heard anything from my husband for about 23 days. Although, he has some health problems, he wasn't allowed to use his pills. He has barely survived. Although, it is an essential human right to have a lawyer, no lawyer has accepted our proposals, and no lawyer has been assigned to him by government either.

I'm very anxious for his life. He is only one person out of a total of about fifty thousand (increasing day by day), who has been the victim of such medieval behavior by the Turkish government.

I strongly recommend you to visit my husband in TOKAT jail, and also the other victims in all the places (prisons, police stations, gyms), as much person as you can.

An English teacher dismissed

I'm an English teacher in Burdur, Turkey. I was dismissed on 2 September 2016 without any legal basis.

There was a coup attempt on 15 July 2016 in Turkey. Fortunately the coup attempt failed. I am deeply sorry for this attempt because I am a teacher and a patriot, so I teach patriotism, democracy, justice, and equality to my students. I love my job and students very much. A week later on 22 July, I was suspended from my duty. The reason why I was suspended is because I was a member of an educational union (aktif eğitim sen) which I resigned eight months before and for being a member of terrorist organisation (FETÖ). Being a member of

educational union is totally legal so I don't understand why it is something related.

Police searched my home and couldn't find anything related to coup attempt.

On 29 July 2016 I was summoned to bear testimony. Before the testimony the police took my mobile phone and memory card which is inside it.

I am accused of being a member of a terrorist organisation, with which I have no relations.

In court, the judge asked me 'why I was a member of the educational union and do I have connections with coup attempt?' I answered 'because it is a union and it protects rights of the teachers and I have no connection with coup attempt.'

I was dismissed on 2 September 2016 without any legal basis. Because some of the higher judges and members of higher judicial bodies are dismissed I think I cannot prove that I am innocent in Turkey.

What I request from your organisation is to hear my voice also not only mine thousands of other just like me.

University staff suspended, fired, and jailed

I am ... from Afyonkarahisar, Turkey. I was working as a nurse at Afyon Kocatepe University in Afyonkarahisar city. I was suspended at 20th of July 2016, just after one month from the date my husband was suspended from his job. My husband, Assistant Professor Dr. ..., was the head of Psychiatry Department in Afyon Kocatepe University. He had been working as an academician in this department for eleven years. He had trained himself very well in his branch and worked hard to gain these experiences.

He was accused of being a member of armed terrorist organization and in opposition to the law without any concrete evidence. Even though he had no relation with the group attempting coup, he was accused just because hostility and slanders of some people working in the same university.

He was suspended at 20th of July 2016 and fired from his job with delegated legislation. He was held in jail for nine days. Even we, his family, couldn't communicate with him anyway. We couldn't see or talk to him for nine days. We were really worried about his health. We only learned about the circumstances in which he lived for nine days in jail from other persons who were freed.

They had been held in a jail cell with five people, but actually the place was sufficient for only one person. The jail was six square meters. There was only one bed and one sofa.

My husband and the other people in his jail had been very sad about this and they were mentally depressed. My children and I had difficulties spiritually and financially, and suffered a lot during my husband's custody period. My children were especially seriously affected because of their father's unsettling condition. My youngest's school was closed because

it was found to be related with this group by the government. He had to leave his friends and teachers. They are very upset about this.

It's impossible for us to be related to this coup attempt planned against democracy. The slander and accusations hurt us too much. We are the grandchildren of Çanakkale martyrs and veterans. It's unacceptable for us to be slandered as traitors. My husband has dedicated his life to save the lives of other people and he has worked as a doctor for twenty years. How can it be possible for a person who has such a holy career to be included in a plan of killing people?

I am writing this letter to you to request help from human rights organizations. And I would be very happy if you can tell the world our unjust treatment and victimisation.

We don't know exactly where to apply to tell our unjust treatment. We also would be grateful if you can inform us about the authorities we can consult. We look forward to your response.

Thank you very much.

A plea from many

We are citizens of Turkish Republic. While we were working as teachers the Turkish Government dismissed us using the excuse of the coup, without any investigation. As teachers we are not related to coup. We couldn't use right of defense although we are innocent. We don't know anything about why we are dismissed. Hundreds of thousands of officers and their families are abandoned to hunger. Also no one wants to give us work because the Turkish Government has names us as terrorists. We hope you to announce European Nations our problems. WE ARE NOT PART OF THE COUP, ONLY TEACHERS.

Thanks for your interest.