

URGENT ACTION

ACADEMICS TARGETED FOR PEACE APPEAL, RELEASED

Turkish academics Muzaffer Kaya, Esra Mungan, Kivanç Ersoy and Meral Camcı were released from pre-trial detention on 22 April. The prosecution against them for “making propaganda for a terrorist organisation” following their support to a peace appeal has stopped but they have not been acquitted.

Turkish academics **Muzaffer Kaya, Esra Mungan, Kivanç Ersoy and Meral Camcı** were released from pre-trial detention on 22 April. The first three had been detained since 15 March and Meral Camcı since 31 March. The four academics are amongst the initial 1,128 signatories of an appeal criticizing ongoing curfews and security operations in south eastern Turkey and calling on the “government to prepare the conditions for negotiations and create a road map that would lead to a lasting peace which includes the demands of the Kurdish political movement.” Shortly after the publication of the appeal on 11 January, a criminal investigation was opened into the initial signatories, including the four academics. There are currently over 2,000 signatories to the appeal.

After Muzaffer Kaya, Esra Mungan, Kivanç Ersoy and Meral Camcı organised a press conference on 10 March renewing their call for peace and condemning the harassment of academics who had signed the petition, the Istanbul Chief Prosecutor initiated a new and separate investigation accusing them of “making propaganda for a terrorist organisation”. Shortly after, they were put in pre-trial detention.

During the first hearing on 22 April the court ruled that Muzaffer Kaya, Esra Mungan, Kivanç Ersoy and Meral Camcı would be released. It also ruled that their prosecution for “making propaganda for a terrorist organization” would be stopped, pending a decision by the Minister of Justice on whether investigation on charges under Article 301 of the Penal Code “Denigrating the Turkish Nation” should proceed, as requested by the prosecutor.

Amnesty International has long called for the repeal of Article 301, which provides for a penalty of imprisonment for six months to two years, as it represents an unfair restriction of the right to freedom of expression. A new hearing date was set for 27 September.

Whilst the release of Muzaffer Kaya, Esra Mungan, Kivanç Ersoy and Meral Camcı is welcome, they have not been acquitted and continue to be at risk of unfair prosecution for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression. We will continue monitoring the situation closely and taking action as appropriate.

No further action is requested from the UA network at this point. Thank you to all those who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 78/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR44/3792/2016/en/>

Name: Muzaffer Kaya (m), Esra Mungan (f), Kivanç Ersoy (m) and Meral Camcı (f).

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 78/16 Index: EUR 44/3902/2016 Issue Date: 25 April 2016

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