



2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016

BRITISH  
SOCIOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

Bailey Suite, Palatine House,  
Belmont Business Park,  
Belmont, Durham, DH1 1TW

T: +44 (0)191 383 0839

F: +44 (0)191 383 0782

E: [enquiries@britsoc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@britsoc.org.uk)

[www.britsoc.co.uk](http://www.britsoc.co.uk)

Mr Abdurrahman Bilgiç  
Ambassador  
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern  
Ireland  
43 Belgrave Square  
London  
SW1X 8PA

Dear Mr Bilgiç

**Re: BSA statement on academic freedom in Turkey**

The British Sociological Association (BSA) expresses its grave concern over reports that the Turkish government's public criticism of the petition of 'Academics for Peace' (with 2218 signatures) has prompted governmental, political, and professional repression of academics throughout Turkey. We call on the Turkish government and Turkish universities to protect academic freedom and to desist from the mistreatment of academics.

The BSA understands that many sociologists are among those who signed a petition calling for an end to state violence against Kurds and for a return to peace negotiations. We also understand that the Turkish Higher Education Council (YOK) and state prosecutors have begun investigations of the signatories to this petition who are accused of insulting the state and supporting terrorism, and are facing possible charges of treason. Some universities have fired staff members; others have begun proceedings to fire staff members who have signed the statement or are planning to take other punitive measures against them. We understand that a public atmosphere of intimidation and threat against academics is growing, with some calling for violence against them.

The BSA respectfully asks that the Turkish government takes immediate steps to ensure that the Turkish Higher Education Council (YOK) and Turkish universities drop all investigations of, and actions against, the signatories of the Peace Petition. We also respectfully ask that criminal investigations alleging that the peace petition is "terrorist organization propaganda" are reversed.

If the repressive measures taken against these academics are not lifted, there will be serious consequences for the international collaboration between Turkish and British scholars, universities, and other institutions.

The BSA asks that the Turkish government and universities stop all punitive actions against the signatories of the Peace Petition and that Turkey observe the international human rights

conventions to which it is legally bound, as well as norms of academic freedom essential in all democratic societies. We would be grateful for your reassurance that the government of Turkey will act rapidly to reestablish academic freedom for Turkish academics

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynn Jamieson".

**Lynn Jamieson**  
**Professor of Sociology, University of Edinburgh**  
**President of the British Sociological Association on behalf of the BSA and Board of Trustees**