

# URGENT ACTION

## STUDENTS DETAINED FOR ANTI-WAR PROTEST

**11 students from Istanbul's Boğaziçi University, who had attended a small peaceful campus protest on 19 March against Turkey's military operation in Afrin, Syria, have been arrested and remain in police custody following statements by government officials labelling them 'terrorists'. They risk prosecution under anti-terrorism laws and expulsion from university.**

At least **11 students from Istanbul's Boğaziçi University** have been taken into police custody, accused of 'making propaganda for a terrorist organization', for staging a peaceful protest on the university campus on 19 March, against Turkey's military operation in Afrin, Syria. They remain held at Gayrettepe police station, in Beşiktaş district. Six students were taken into custody on 22 March, arrested at their houses and student halls of residence. On 23 March, another student was arrested on campus. On 24 March, three of the seven students were released from detention but, on 25 March, three more were taken into custody. On 26 March, another student, who had been absent during the raid on his home, presented himself at the police station and was also detained, while another three were detained on campus. This brings the total number of detained students to 11. The students' lawyer told Amnesty International that they were likely to be interrogated by police in the coming days before being referred to the prosecutor. They risk prosecution under anti-terrorism laws and expulsion from university.

Another group of seven students, who were peacefully protesting the initial detentions, were also detained for eight hours on 22 March and were all allegedly ill-treated, some sexually, with one person sustaining a broken nose.

Their arrests came after a number of government spokespeople, including President Erdogan, issued inflammatory and prejudicial statements about the students, labelling them 'terrorist students'.

The detained students' peaceful opposition to Turkey's military operation in Syria is protected under the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression, guaranteed under both domestic and international law.

### **Please write immediately in Turkish or your own language calling on the authorities to:**

- Immediately and unconditionally release all detained students;
- Ensure that they are not subject to any administrative sanction and are able to continue their studies at university;
- Carry out a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into all allegations of ill-treatment in custody of the seven students detained on 22 March, and ensure those still in detention are protected from torture and ill-treatment.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 MAY 2018 TO:**

#### Minister of Justice

Mr. Abdülhamit Gül

Adalet Bakanlığı

06659 Ankara

Turkey

Tel: +90 (0312) 417 77 70

Fax: +90 (0312) 419 33 70

Email: [ozelkalem@adalet.gov.tr](mailto:ozelkalem@adalet.gov.tr)

Salutation: Dear Minister

#### **And copies to:**

#### Minister of Interior

Süleyman Soylu

İçişleri Bakanlığı

Bakanlıklar

Ankara, Turkey

Twitter: @suleymansoylu

Fax: +90 312 418 1795

Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR ABDURRAHMAN BİLGİÇ, Embassy of the Republic of Turkey, 43 Belgrave Square SW1X 8PA, 020 7393 0202, [embassy.london@mfa.gov.tr](mailto:embassy.london@mfa.gov.tr)  
Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 23 March, President Erdogan stated: 'we will find these terrorist students and do what's necessary. The academics in our universities must also be very careful. When we establish a link between these students and the academics we will also do what's necessary about them'. On 24 March, commenting on the detentions again, President Erdogan said: 'we will not grant those communist students, those terrorist enemies of the state the right to education at university'.

The right to freedom of expression is guaranteed in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 19 of the ICCPR, both of which Turkey is a party to. Although international human rights law does permit certain restrictions on freedom of expression, these restrictions must meet a strict three-part test: they must be provided by law; be limited to specific purposes such as national security, public order or respect of the rights or reputation of others; and be necessary and proportionate to the achievement of one of those permissible purposes.

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