
OPEN LETTER

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October 2016

H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
President of the Republic of Turkey
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi
06560 Beştepe, Ankara
Turkey

Re: Appeal for Necmiye Alpay

Dear President Erdoğan,

The undersigned representatives of national and international language associations are writing on behalf of our global community to express concern about the recent detention of prominent translator, philologist, and writer Necmiye Alpay, now seventy years old.

As you are undoubtedly aware, on August 31, 2016, the Eighth Istanbul Criminal Court of Peace ordered Dr. Alpay's arrest, charging her with membership in a terrorist organization and disruption of the unity of the state; this action took place in the context of a continuing investigation into the newspaper *Özgür Gündem*, where Dr. Alpay served as an Advisory Board member. Against the backdrop of what appears to be deteriorating respect in your country for the right to free speech, we believe these charges against her are an attempt by a non-independent judiciary to silence the voice of a well-known defender of freedom of expression.

Turkey is a party to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) as well as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Article 10 of the ECHR and Article 19 of the ICCPR both provide for the right to freedom of expression; specifically, Article 10 mandates that this "shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority." By using anti-terrorism legislation to suppress Dr. Alpay's right to non-violent free speech, your country is in violation of both treaties.

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We urge you to honor the rights enshrined in these conventions and request that you release our colleague, Dr. Alpay, without delay.

Sincerely,

Maya Hess, President, Red T

Linda Fitchett, Chair, Conflict Zone Group, International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC)

Henry Liu, President, International Federation of Translators and Interpreters (FIT)

Aurora Humarán, President, International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters (IAPTI)

Angela Sasso, President, Critical Link International (CLI)

Debra Russell, President, World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI)

Liese Katschinka, President, European Legal Interpreters and Translators Association (EULITA)

Esther Navarro-Hall, Chair, National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT)

Cc:

Mr. Binali Yıldırım, Prime Minister

Mr. Bekir Bozdağ, Minister of Justice