



EuroMed Rights
EuroMed Droits
الأورو-متوسطية للحقوق

Brussels, 15 November 2017

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

I wish to draw your attention on the fate of Ms **Nuriye Gülmen**, a postgraduate student, and Mr **Semih Özakça**, a school teacher. You may not know them. They are two among 130,000 people dismissed from their public function in Turkey since 15 July 2016. The specificity of this case is that these two academics did not accept to be arbitrarily expelled from their jobs. At first, they asked to be reintegrated in the public function formally and with a peaceful sit-in in front of the statue dedicated to human rights in Ankara. During 120 days of sit-in, they were arrested at least 17 times, often brutally. On 11 March 2017, they began a hunger strike, which as of today has lasted for 250 days. Mrs Esta Özakça, Semih Özakça's wife, was also dismissed and has been on hunger strike for 173 days.

It goes without saying that their bodies have already suffered irreversible damage, as I could witness myself when I met Mr Semih Özakça on 8 November in Ankara. I unfortunately could not meet Ms Nuriye Gülmen as she was in detention. Both face criminal proceedings based on the current prevailing principle in Turkey: to protest peacefully against arbitrary measures brings further prosecution. They can't even defend themselves against this as their lawyers are also prosecuted and detained.

There are many other issues to discuss on the situation in Turkey, but what matters most to me is to do everything in my power to make sure Ms Nuriye Gülmen and Mr Semih Özakça don't die. Other victims deserve our attention as well, and the urgency requires us to intervene in their favour.

I therefore urge you to press the Turkish authorities to reinstate Ms Nuriye Gülmen, Mr Semih Özakça and Mrs Esta Özakça in their jobs and to put an end to the proceedings they are facing.

Thank you in advance for your urgent intervention.

Yours respectfully,

Michel Tubiana
President of EuroMed Rights