

Update by the Social and Political Psychology Platform of Turkey (March 2019)

Dear all,

We hope you've been well since we last spoke. We're emailing you to update you on Demet Islambay's hearing, which was last week, as well as the case of Professor Füsün Üstel.

Demet Islambay's hearing was on March 7th, and was her first trial for which she came to Istanbul. She was planning to make her statement of defense, but the court decided to send her case to Ankara, the city where she signed the petition and where the "crime" was committed, without asking whether she wished to give her defense or not. At this point, we do not know if the Ankara courts will accept the case or not, nor do we have any foresight on the next hearing date, just that the process has been prolonged.

The other important case has been of Professor **Füsün Üstel**, who was the first of the academics NOT to receive a suspended sentence. Her case went for appeal to the Istanbul Regional Court, and her sentence was upheld, meaning that she will be starting a prison sentence of 15 months sometime within the next two months.

Since the early days of the hearings, academics have started receiving longer and longer sentences – some up to 36 months. You may remember that any sentences over 24 months do not have the opportunity to be suspended, which means that, just like Prof Üstel, many others who are now going through the appeals process are likely to start serving their prison sentences.

- BAK Germany has provided a bit more information here: <https://academicsforpeace-germany.org/2019/03/10/call-for-urgent-action-assault-on-academic-freedoms-in-turkey-reaches-new-heights/>
- A petition calling for international support of Prof Üstel can be found here: https://secure.avaaz.org/en/community_petitions/Government_of_Turkey_Call_for_international_support_for_Fusun_Ustel_Turkish_academic_for_peace_facing_a_prison

We would appreciate it if you could share either or both links. We will keep you updated on her and the others as we find out more information.

The Social and Political Psychology Platform of Turkey