

21 July 2016

Ambassador Abdurrahman Bilgiç
Turkish Embassy
43 Belgrave Square
LONDON
SW1X 8PA

Your Excellency

On behalf of the 110,000 members of the University and College Union (UCU), I am writing to you to express our union's strong concerns about the latest violations of academic and political freedom in Turkey.

As an education trade union, UCU is particularly alarmed by reports that 15,200 education workers have been suspended by the Turkish Ministry of Education and that the licences of 21,000 teachers employed at private schools have been revoked. Similarly, we strongly condemn the Turkish Council of Higher Education's decision to engineer the forced resignation of over 1,500 faculty deans at state and foundation universities and to introduce an academic travel ban. UCU is concerned for the personal and professional well-being of the thousands of education workers implicated in these actions. The speed and scale of these measures suggests a purge rather than a process based on any evidence of involvement in the attempted military coup. While we firmly reject the attempted coup, Turkey must stop using educators as scapegoats in response to the unlawful actions of the military and immediately cease its witch hunt in the country's schools and universities.

These new repressive actions follow on from an ongoing assault on freedom of expression within Turkish universities, in particular, the criminal and disciplinary investigations that are taking place against over 2000 academics simply on the basis that they were signatories of the '*We will not be a party to this crime*' peace petition.

UCU calls on the Turkish authorities to cease *all* repressive actions against Turkish education employees and to respect and guarantee academic freedom, institutional autonomy and quality education for all by involving education employees in all decisions concerning the education sector and recognising education trade unions as professional organisations. We also call on your

government to guarantee the provision of education employees' decent working conditions by putting an end to the prosecution and dismissals of Turkish teachers and academics and to guarantee the development of a democratic society by respecting human rights, freedom of expression and association and the rule of law.

Given the seriousness of the current situation facing our colleagues in Turkey, we request an urgent meeting with you to discuss these issues.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Sally Hunt
General Secretary