

H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
President of the Republic of Turkey
T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Genel Sekreterliği
06689 Çankaya, Ankara

June 17, 2019

Dear President Erdoğan,

Czech Association for Social Anthropology would like to express solidarity with our Turkish colleague Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gül Altınay who was sentenced to two years in prison for expressing her opinion. Prof. Altınay, as well as other Turkish academics, signed a petition 'We will not be a party to this crime!' that just reminded the Turkish state to follow both Turkish and international laws. This peaceful petition condemned the violent actions against the citizens living in the Kurdish provinces. We are convinced that signing similar peaceful petitions cannot be presented as a terrorist act and serve for sentencing anybody to prison.

Prof. Altınay is an internationally respected scholar who represents Turkish capacity to contribute to the advancement of social sciences and humanities not only in Turkey but also way beyond. She has contributed to Gender and Women's Studies with her works on militarism, violence, and associated silences. She has been publishing with respected publishers and her works have been highly cited. Moreover, she has served as a member of the editorial board of the European Journal of Women's Studies. There is no doubt that she is a kind of scholar that Turkey should use as its model of scholarly excellence.

The imprisonment of prof. Altınay was based on her alleged support of a terrorist organisation as a non-member. We are troubled by the fact that people can be sentenced for signing a public peaceful statement that puts emphasis on life in peace and justice. Our association stands in solidarity with prof. Altınay whose academic freedom to raise a critical voice was denied. We urge you to re-examine her case and dismiss the charges that violate basic standards of academic freedom.

Best regards,



Martin Heřmanský, Ph.D.
President of the Czech Association for Social Anthropology