

23 December 2016

Turkey: Imprisonment of academic and human rights defender İřtar Gzaydın

On 20 December 2016, police officers arrested Ms. **İřtar Gzaydın** at her house in Istanbul.

On 20 December 2016, simultaneous police operations were launched in the provinces of Izmir, İstanbul, Manisa and Adana as part of an investigation initiated by Izmir Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office, Terror and Organized Crime Bureau Prosecutor into the “Fethullahist Terror Organization / Parallel State Structure”. During the operations, 14 out of the 33 staff members of Gediz University, who the prosecutor issued arrest warrants for, were detained. As part of this operation, İřtar Gzaydın was detained at her home in Istanbul at 6 am. After her arrest, she was sent to Izmir where she is currently detained. According to İřtar Gzaydın’s lawyer, who was able to gain access to her in detention, she has not been officially charged and her detention is linked to the investigation file on Gediz University which was opened in 2015 and now under a confidentiality order, which affects the lawyer’s access to information on the case.

Prior to this, on 21 July 2016, İřtar Gzaydın was suspended from her work as a Head of Department of Sociology at Gediz University because of her Twitter posts against capital punishment and violence in Turkey. On 22 July 2016, Gediz University in Izmir was closed down by a Statutory Decree for its alleged links with the Fethullahist Terror Organization/Parallel State Structure”. This followed the attempted coup in Turkey that authorities have blamed on a group that allegedly follows the US based cleric Fethullah Gulen.

Front Line Defenders condemns the arrest and detention of İřtar Gzaydın, as it believes they are motivated by her peaceful and legitimate defence of human rights in Turkey.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Turkey to:

- 1.Immediately and unconditionally release human rights defender İřtar Gzaydın and drop all charges against her;
2. Ensure that the treatment of İřtar Gzaydın, while in under arrest, adheres to the conditions set out in the ‘Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment’, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
- 3.Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Turkey are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.