



A Letter from the AMS Committee on Human Rights of Mathematicians

American Mathematical Society Committee on Human Rights of Mathematicians Issues Statement of Concern about Turkish Mathematicians

The Turkish government has charged the mathematician Professor Ayse Berkman with the crime of “making propaganda for a terrorist organization,” based solely on her having signed a petition decrying military operations against civilians in Kurdish provinces. She appeared before the Heavy Penalty Court of Istanbul on January 10, 2019; a translation of her defense statement is available here <https://m.bianet.org/english/freedom-of-expression/204414-statement-of-academic-ayse-berkman> and the petition she signed may be seen here: <https://www.barisicinakademisyenler.net/node/63>.

Professor Berkman received her PhD at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology in 1998. She has been teaching mathematics in Turkey since then, currently at Mimar Sinana University in Istanbul, and is a member of the American Mathematical Society.

The Committee on Human Rights of Mathematicians of the American Mathematical Society deplores these political charges against Professor Berkman, which are a clear violation of human rights and academic freedom. These charges are part of a disturbing pattern: hundreds of academics in Turkey have been charged, and scores sentenced, for similar expressions of opinion. We decry these assaults on academic freedom and urge the Turkish government to respect the political and human rights of Professor Berkman and her colleagues.

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