

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE CRITICAL HEALTH SITUATION OF AYŞE ÖZDOĞAN AND URGENT ACTION TO TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS REGARDING HER SENTENCE**

**06/15/2021**

Under the state of emergency, imposed after the July 2016 attempted coup and lifted on July 2018, President Erdogan presided over the cabinet, which could pass decrees without parliamentary scrutiny or the possibility of appeal to the constitutional court. Public officials continued to be dismissed or suspended by decree without due process, with more than **170,000** dismissed since July 2016. Those dismissed from their jobs lost their income, social benefits, medical insurance and even their homes.

According Stockholm Center for Freedom, Ayşe Özdoğan, a former teacher who was removed from her job in the aftermath of a failed coup in Turkey in July 2016, suffers from a rare form of cancer. Özdoğan and her husband were detained on April 8, 2019 for alleged links to the Gülen movement. She was released on appeal on December 27, 2019 due to her son’s heart condition after an online campaign started by Ömer Faruk Gergerlioğlu, a human rights activist and former deputy from the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP), but her husband was sent to prison.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Stockholm Center for Freedom reports that Özdoğan’s tooth, palate, zygomatic bone and lymph nodes were removed in an emergency operation. Özdoğan lost her ability to see and hear after the operation due to the trauma her facial bones suffered. An appeals court approved a nine year, six month prison sentence for Ayşe Özdoğan.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) states in article 109 that “persons who are found to be not criminally responsible, or who are later diagnosed with severe mental disabilities and/or health conditions, for whom staying in prison would mean an exacerbation of their condition, shall not be detained in prisons, and arrangements shall be made to transfer them to mental health facilities as soon as possible”. We strongly urge the Turkish government to take the case of Ayşe Özdoğan into consideration immediate effectively and take action according to aforesaid international rules.

 

 Hafza Girdap

 Executive Director and Spokesperson

 directorhg@silencedturkey.org

**The Honorable Dunja Mijatovic**

Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
Council of Europe
Avenue de I’Europe F-67075
Strasbourg Cedex, France

Tel: +33 (0)3 88 41 34 21
Fax: +33 (0)3 90 21 50 53
Email:  commissioner@coe.int

**United National Human Rights Committee**

Petitions Team
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva
1211 Geneva 10 (Switzerland)

Fax: + 41 22 917 9022 (particularly for urgent matters)
E-mail: petitions@ohchr.org

**Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities**

Petitions and Inquiries Section
Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations Office at Geneva
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

E-mail: petitions@ohchr.org,
urgent-action@ohchr.org.
registry@ohchr.org

**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission**

Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
5100 [O’Neill House Office Building](http://www.aoc.gov/map/oneill-house-office-building)
200 C Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20515
United States of America

Phone: +1 (202) 225-3599
Fax: +1 (202) 226-6584
Email: TLHRC@mail.house.gov

**US Helsinki Commission**

234 Ford House Office Building
3rd and D Streets SW
Washington, DC 20515

Email: info@csce.gov

1. <https://stockholmcf.org/appeals-court-upholds-sentence-of-former-teacher-suffering-from-rare-form-of-cancer/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)