



## INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DEMOCRATIC LAWYERS

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### **IADL RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT STRUGGLE AT BOGAZICI UNIVERSITY IN TURKEY**

Since the beginning of the year, the students from the Bogazici University in Turkey are organizing demonstrations against the appointment of a “trustee rector” for their university by a presidential decree.

The protests have continued with actions by university students all around Turkey. The academic staff in some universities is also supporting the students` movement actively. The demands of the students are clear enough: They want the appointed rector to resign and to be able to choose the rectors in all universities in a democratic way.

The Turkish government has been targeting higher education, together with all the other institutions in Turkey. These oppressive practices against universities became prominent at the beginning of 2016, after the announcement of the Academics for Peace` declaration. Since then around 1000 academics have faced criminal investigations and prosecutions. During the state of emergency more than 6000 academics were dismissed from universities because of their political views. After the amendment of the Constitution, the President had the power to appoint rectors to the public universities.

Today in Turkey`s prisons there are more than 50.000 students. The students who were expelled from the universities likely exceed that number.

On January 1st, 2021, President Erdogan used his power once again to appoint Melih Bulu as rector to Bogazici University. Interpreting Melih Bulu`s appointment as a threat to academic and scientific freedom, students began to organize resistance and demonstrations against this act of President Erdogan.

Since then, the demonstrations are growing and the students from different universities are participating in the activities in different cities.

The police forces` intervention against the demonstration was unacceptable. They used plastic bullets and tear gases against the protesters, and, almost every day, hundreds of students are arrested. Lawyers are reporting a significant number of cases of torture and arrested students forcibly strip searched at the police station.

So far, the court system has failed to uphold justice. For many students, the courts issued house arrest orders. In one week, more than 500 students and around 10 lawyers were arrested. Four students were jailed and many more were released with a judicial control, typically banned from leaving the country or subjected to house arrest.

In addition, President Erdogan is attempting to stir up hatred and repression against the LGBTI+ students who are active in the protests and has labeled all the protesters “terrorists” almost every day in a series of public speeches.

IADL, support the demands of the students and expresses its sincere solidarity with them and their supporters across Turkey and calls for the immediate release of all imprisoned students. We stand with the slogans of their movement: “We won’t look down! Resisting oppression is a common duty!” We affirm that the students organizing at Bogazici University and challenging the Erdogan government and the Turkish regime are not alone and extend our international solidarity.