AMERICAN MATHEMATICAL SOCIETY
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Statement of Continued Concern
for Turkish Mathematicians
AMS Committee on Human Rights of Mathematicians

The American Mathematical Society's Committee on Human Rights of Mathematicians has recently voiced objections to the political prosecution of the Turkish mathematicians Betul Tanbay and Ayse Berkman, who are among the thousands of signatories of the petition protesting military action taken by the Turkish military against Kurdish provinces. Signatories of this petition, including mathematicians and other scholars, have been threatened with the loss of the right to travel and their positions. Recent news indicates that the situation in Turkey is worsening.

- On February 21, 2019, 28 academics were sentenced to a total of nearly 60 years in prison for having signed the petition "Not in our Name." In particular, the mathematician Öznur Yaşar Diner was given the especially harsh sentence of 27 months based on her not "showing remorse."

- On March 5, 2019, Sela Feza Arslan, a mathematician at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in Istanbul who also signed this petition, had his second hearing at the Heavy Penal Court. His defense can be read here.

- On March 15, 2016, Kıvanç Ersoy, along with three others who signed and read aloud the petition, was arrested and imprisoned for 40 days.   His case, involving a charge of "Propaganda of Terrorism," is ongoing.

- On May 11, Tuna Altinel, a Turkish mathematician employed at the University of Lyon in France and another signatory of the petition, was arrested in Turkey and remains imprisoned; the European Mathematical Society has issued a strong and urgent condemnation. A petition demanding his release can be found here.

- Undergraduate students have also been arrested, imprisoned, and charged with crimes for anti-war activity.

The American Mathematical Society's Committee on Human Rights of Mathematicians reiterates its condemnation of these political charges against mathematicians and other academics. Political repression of this nature not only violates basic human rights, it jeopardizes scientific inquiry and scholarship and the standing of Turkish institutions of higher learning and research. We urge the Turkish government to restore the political and human rights of Professors Diner, Berkman, Arslan, Altinel, and their colleagues.

The AMS Committee on Human Rights of Mathematicians
(Dr. Arthur Ogus, University of California at Berkeley, Committee Chair)

May 28, 2019