

The purge in Turkey deepens: The case of ISPP Member Orhan Kaya

An ISPP member, Orhan Kaya, successfully defended his dissertation on February 21, 2019 at Bolu Abant İzzet Baysal University in Turkey. Within the same day of Orhan's doctoral defense, the Rectorate of his university opened an unfounded disciplinary investigation to discharge him from his studentship, and therefore dismiss his doctoral graduation. It is stated in the notification that they opened this disciplinary investigation on the basis of his existing legal investigation regarding the "Academics for Peace" petition. Like all other signatories, our friend Orhan is also being accused of making terrorist propaganda. Although the court process for Orhan has not even started yet (his first hearing is April 11, 2019), the Rectory stated that they opened disciplinary proceedings in pursuit of the *finalized court decision*. Now, the university is looking for a "legal ground" to postpone or possibly prevent his graduation due to his ongoing investigation. Interestingly, when Orhan told them that he had not yet received a final court decision, and that therefore the foundation of the disciplinary proceedings was wrong, the officials of the university agree. However, they intend to prolong the disciplinary investigation until they find a "legal ground". There are two options for Orhan right now: 1) to sue the university or 2) to wait for the investigation to end. Moreover, when Orhan asks for documentation in writing about his ongoing situation, he is refused. Though he has been planning to apply to different positions both domestically and abroad, he is currently unable to do so, and may not be able to graduate at all. Orhan is not an isolated case. While previously the purge consisted of dismissing academics from their jobs, now the purge has extended to students who are dismissed from or denied access to graduate programs.

ISPP continues to follow the situation in Turkey closely!