

NEWS RELEASE
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REGARDING THE RESIGNATION OF DEANS IN TURKISH HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Due to the unfair criticism of international public statements regarding the imposed resignation of 1577 university deans, we have noticed that a statement is needed to clarify misunderstandings.

Turkey has experienced a coup attempt to overthrow its democratically-elected and legitimate government on July 15, 2016. This despicable coup attempt has failed thanks to the citizens of this country, the leaders and especially the leadership of our President, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who have courageously and decisively stood up against the armed and violent attacks.

Turkish state, with the support of its citizens and the parliament including all oppositional parties, is vigilantly going after the perpetrators of these malicious attacks. These efforts to protect its democracy and reestablish and maintain the functioning of the Turkish state and its institutions require extraordinary measures that need to be implemented promptly and unequivocally.

The failed coup attempt in Turkey has provided strong signals that the responsible clandestine and illegal armed organization may have penetrated into our higher education system and this illegal organization may have established strong links with the schools and universities nationwide.

The resignation of the deans should be regarded as a precautionary measure to facilitate and precipitate the implementation of the necessary steps to reestablish the autonomy of our universities by severing possible ties with these clandestine and illegal organizations.

Desperate times may require desperate measures. As is known, decisions limiting the fundamental rights and liberties are made in case of state of emergency. Unfortunately we have been witnessing these undesired restrictions in recent years in some countries. Turkey's Democracy has been under attack with serious potential consequences. While acting within the boundaries of its constitution the Government of Turkey is determined to take all the necessary measures to overcome the continuing potential risks. Therefore, as part of these measures, we have agreed with our rectors for their faculty deans to temporarily step aside so that the investigatory process shall be conducted swiftly. It is very likely most of the universities will be able to reinstate their deans back to their duties once the review process is completed.

We hope that the facts as stated above will circumvent the misconceptions and clarify the international public opinion. In consideration of the seriousness of the attacks Turkey has courageously eradicated, we believe the international public opinion will also become aware of the difficulties we are going through and adopt a perspective supporting the democracy in Turkey.

Respectfully announced to the public.

The Council of Higher Education of Turkey