

As the students and alumni of Ankara University Women's Studies Solidarity Group, we don't accept the unlawful and unfair expulsion of our professors from the academy! As the students and alumni of Ankara University, Women's Studies Program, which has been offering graduate courses since 1996 and contributing to the feminist theory and action for more than 20 years, we couldn't remain silent in such a period of siege against scientific thought and freedom of expression.

We couldn't remain silent as our professor, the Head of the Department of Women's Studies, Prof. Funda Şenol Cantek has been expelled with an unlawful State of Emergency Decree on February 7, Decree 686 which was recently announced. Our professor Betül Yarar had already been expelled with Decree 672 with a similar decree in September. Moreover, our professors Alev Özkazanç and Gülay Toksöz, who took part in the Academics for Peace group like Funda Cantek and Betül Yarar, were forced to take retirement due to the austere conditions of academia in Turkey. On the 10th of February, when academic freedom and freedom of thought were smashed under the boots of the police forces raiding the Cebeci Campus of Ankara University, a fellow student Maryam Ostadi was subjected to police violence and before she was taken into custody along with our friend and our teacher Assoc. Prof. Emel Memiş. Many public officials who are among the students and alumni of Women's Studies Program were expelled from their offices illegitimately just because they defended peace, democracy and equality just like many other professors. Hundreds of academics in Ankara University and other universities were expelled by State of Emergency Decrees since September 2016. Both in Ankara University and the other universities the same process have been experienced, and many academics have been taken away from universities by the mentioned series of Decrees.

In fact, we know that Chancellor Erkan İbiş and his administration is directly responsible with this process in Ankara University!. During this period, our professors who have advocated peace and non-violence have been criminalized and subjected to investigation. When they became targets of the hate rhetoric by the pro-government newspapers such as Akit and Vahdet, which declared gender studies is an institution of "heresy" and "perversion", the university administration has not only remained passive despite hundreds of complaints, but also decreased the number of students at the department, despite the hundreds of applicants each year. We recently have learned that Erkan İbiş, who has been restraining academic freedom and restricting our living spaces at the campuses, is also responsible for the unlawful expulsions! We urge Erkan İbiş, who is responsible for all the injustice, to resign!

Decrees mean obligatory retirements, the courses that will not be opened, the students that will be left without supervisors, the dissertations that are hindered from being finished, and the department that is left without a head administrator. Furthermore, they mean that the academics who defend gender equality, peace, democracy and freedom of expression being discouraged from expanding their values and sharing them with their students with this purpose. Decrees mean unemployment, precarity, and a life that is deprived of all public rights. They mean the submission of the dream of an equal and free world, and the suffocation of thoughts that go after this dream. They also mean that police brutality and arrestments will end the peace, beauty, and the spirit of life by the use of custody, oppression, violence, fear and sorrow.

We came together in the Women's Studies Program with our different experiences. As a

group of students with different backgrounds, it was only the wisdom and diversity of the idea of feminism that brought us together under Ankara University Women's Studies Program. We experienced being side to side without any hierarchy: producing together and acting with solidarity in this department. No matter what happens, they will never be able to destroy our diversity and beauty! They will never be able to break us apart from our teachers, friends, and our campus! We believe that our professors and friends will return, we will struggle for their return!

No one should think that the Women's Studies Program, which has brought academics, activists, workers, artists and people from other various groups together under the umbrella of feminism in Turkey, and which has encouraged them to produce together, does need a stationary address! Being a student at the Women Studies Program doesn't mean to produce in an ivory tower, it actually means producing the knowledge of everyday experiences, the knowledge of street and life, and to learn from the life outside academy as well. Knowledge spreads! Life spreads! We are everywhere!

As Funda Şenol Cantek, the Head of our Department, has recently stated: "Academy has spread into the streets. And this will be a thorn in their side!"

**ANKARA UNIVERSITY, SOLIDARITY GROUP OF THE STUDENTS AND GRADUATES OF
WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM**