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OF ACADEMIES AND SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES

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Report Says Turkish Scientists Unjustly Accused;

International Human Rights Science Network Calls for Exoneration of Eight Colleagues

Washington, DC, July 31, 2013

A report, “Scientists, Engineers, and Medical Doctors in Turkey,” by U.S. Nobel Laureate Peter Diamond, German surgeon Hans-Peter Zenner, and Carol Corillon, executive director of the International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies—for which the report was written—calls on the government of Turkey to release one scientist (serving a 13-year sentence) from prison and drop charges against three others who are in long-term detention and release them immediately and to also drop charges against four others. All are charged with terrorism-related crimes. None is known to have advocated or practiced violence.

The report follows a mission undertaken by the three authors in February, which included visits to Sincan high security prison outside the capital, Ankara, and to Silivri high security prison, about a two-hour drive from Istanbul. The report describes four enormous and highly-irregular political trials heard by the otherwise defunct “High Criminal Courts.”

According to Professor Diamond, “the four trials which include our eight colleagues are very far from being fair and thus are harming Turkey’s international reputation.” He went on to say that, “given all of the information available to us, there appears to be no credible basis on which to judge any of our eight colleagues guilty of committing the crimes of which they have been accused.”

Professor Zenner, who is a surgeon, agrees with Professor Diamond’s assessment. He said, “I felt personally compelled to participate in the mission because five respected medical doctors are involved and because I believe that Germany and other European Union member countries can and should continue to encourage Turkey’s efforts to bring its laws into conformity with internationally-recognized human rights standards.

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FOUNDING MEMBERS
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(*Nobel Laureate)

Academies in the Network support and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, assist unjustly incarcerated nonviolent professional colleagues, address grave science-related human rights issues, and advocate for member institutions whose independence is threatened.

(The U.S. National Academies, non-profit, non-governmental honorary societies, host the Network secretariat.)

www.nas.edu.hrnetwork

Network Executive Committee member Dr. Abdallah S. Daar said, “I’m certain that I speak for all members of the Network’s Executive Committee in expressing our grave concern about the unjust charges brought against our eight scientific colleagues in Turkey. We hope that the facts and recommendations presented in the report will, after due consideration by the Turkish government and its judiciary, help bring about the immediate release of those who are incarcerated and the exoneration of all eight of the accused.”

The International Human Rights Network of Academies and Scholarly Societies is made up of 79 national academies and scholarly societies around the world that work together to address serious science and human rights issues of mutual concern. It aims to put into practice the professional duty of scientists and scholars to assist those colleagues whose human rights have been—or are threatened to be—infringed and to promote and protect the independence of academies and scholarly societies worldwide.

Peter Diamond represented the Committee on Human Rights of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine. Hans-Peter Zenner represented the Human Rights Committee of the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina.

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