



Canadian Association of University Teachers  
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

March 10, 2021

**BY EMAIL:** [contact@tccb.gov.tr](mailto:contact@tccb.gov.tr)

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan  
President of the Republic of Turkey  
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi  
06560 Beştepe / Ankara  
TURKEY

**Subject: Restore Academic Structure and Freedom at Boğaziçi University**

Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the 72,000 members of the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) to express deep concern regarding the lack of democratic rectorate elections and the illegitimate appointment of Mr. Melih Bulu - a member of your political party - in January 2021 as trustee rector at the Boğaziçi University in Istanbul.

Political interference at Boğaziçi threatens the institution's academic freedom and democracy and risks eroding its globally respected reputation. The appointment of Mr. Bulu overrides the university's long-standing practice of electing one of their own faculty members to the position.

Your government's unilateral decision earlier this month to create additional faculties in law and communications at the university, with the intent of installing politically appointed academics, is political overreach into the university's structure that undermines the autonomy and quality of higher education in Turkey. It also contradicts your government's obligations under the 1997 United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) *Recommendation Concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel* with respect to academic freedom, and autonomy for institutions of higher education.

CAUT also condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the surveillance, excessive use of force, and public censure against student protestors - particularly those who identify as LGBTQ. Your government's unwillingness to meet with student groups and gross mischaracterization of their peaceful opposition as terrorism weakens Turkey's civic rights and constitutional protections for freedom of expression and assembly.

We urge you to withdraw the appointment of Mr. Bulu and respect the university's democratic rectoral election process. We further encourage you to rescind the decision to alter the university's academic structure and restore academic freedom and institutional autonomy and governance. Lastly, we call on your government to immediately end public persecution and drop all charges against student protestors, and to engage directly with Boğaziçi University's faculty and students.

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While awaiting both a commitment and a positive intervention from your government, we will continue to closely follow the situation in Turkey.

Yours sincerely,



David Robinson  
Executive Director

c.c. Hon. Marc Garneau, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs ([marc.garneau@international.gc.ca](mailto:marc.garneau@international.gc.ca))  
Jamal Khokhar, Ambassador of Canada to Turkey ([ANKRA@international.gc.ca](mailto:ANKRA@international.gc.ca))  
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