

Joint Statement by the French Sociological Association and the International Sociological Association in support of Prof. Pinar Selek

On June 28, 2024, the fifth trial against Professor Pinar Selek will start in Istanbul.

A renowned sociologist and writer, currently a Professor at the Université de Côte d'Azur in France, Dr. Pinar Selek has been the subject of four trials since 1998. Her judicial problems started when she was indicted for refusing to hand over the sources of her research on Kurdish minorities. Accusations of terrorism were made up later. Experts have dismantled these as having no serious basis, which is why she was acquitted on four occasions (in 2006, 2008, 2011, and 2014).

In June 2022, without any new information in the judicial file, the Supreme Court overturned the acquittal, making the life prison sentence enforceable. For these reasons, which have no basis in fact, Pinar Selek has been targeted because of her sociological research, literary works, and stance in favor of the Kurdish and Armenian minorities, feminist movements, Turkish LGTB+ minorities, and, more broadly, democracy in Turkey.

Once again, she risks a life sentence. She has been asked to attend the trial in person, which is inadvisable as she would face immediate imprisonment due to an arrest warrant issued against her by Turkish judicial authorities in January 2023.

The International Sociological Association and the French Sociological Association express their deepest concern about the political and judicial harassment of Prof. Pinar Selek which has been going on for 26 years.

Judicial harassment for such a long period is exhausting. However, during these 26 years, Dr. Pinar Selek has found the energy to continue her research and to publish numerous articles and books that contribute to a better understanding of contemporary French and Turkish societies. The successive legal processes and ongoing harassment have only strengthened international solidarity and the demand for justice. Dr. Selek deserves the academic freedom to pursue her activities as a scholar, professor, researcher, and writer in a safe and democratic environment.

This most recent political trial for terrorism constitutes an extreme form of attack on her freedom of expression and academic freedom. Beyond Dr. Pinar Selek's personal plight, this episode is indicative of the repression to which academics are increasingly being subjected and of the threats to freedom of research and expression in Turkey and a growing number of other countries.

Dr. Pinar Selek has become a symbol of the attack on the freedoms to think, research, express oneself and write in Turkey. The very foundations of democracy are at stake. Our associations call on the French government to affirm its full support for our colleague Professor Pinar Selek and to maintain its refusal to extradite her and its commitment to ensure her protection. We ask the French, European, and international authorities to call on the Turkish government to stop this judicial harassment and to respect the freedom of research and opinion.

We call on all democratic governments to express their refusal to enforce the international arrest warrant and to allow Dr. Pinar Selek to move freely within the European Union.

The International Sociological Association and the French Sociological Association will stand by Pinar Selek and attend the trial hearing on June 28, 2024, together with a large international delegation of elected representatives, lawyers, academics, researchers, artists, and citizens who are calling for an end to this judicial harassment and for Dr. Pinar Selek to be acquitted of all charges so that she can regain her full freedom of movement, action and research in Turkey, France and wherever her research and life will take her.

More information about the international support campaign for Pinar Selek and the mobilizations planned on June 28, 2024, is available at <https://www.helloasso.com/associations/karinca/formulaires/1>.