

Turkey's sacked academics ended the hunger strike, vowed to continue the struggle

by Duygu Yildiz - 26/01/2018 12:59



Turkey's hunger strikers Nuriye Gulmen and Semih Ozakca have ended the hunger strike on the day of 324. They declared their decision to press as saying 'we are ending the hunger strike but not the struggle.'

A former academic Nuriye Gulmen and teacher Semih Ozakca were sacked from their job by decree laws after the failed 15 the July coup attempt.

Both, later arrested on accusations of being a member of the militant leftist DHKP-C group and spent months in jail under unhealthy conditions. They were released after a persistent public outcry.

On 26th January, the state of emergency commission denied their request to return their jobs once again. Gulmen, Ozakca and their supporters came together and declared their decision to the public. Denial of their request by the state of

emergency commission has given them the opportunity to take judicial proceedings.



"We decided to resist by living"

"We decided to end our hunger strike but not the struggle. We will resort to the judgement and demand reemployment claim by legal ways," said Nuriye Gulmen, vowing to continue the struggle. After their bodies have recovered, they will take their place at Ankara's Yuksel Street where the resistance began.

"We were two people at the beginning. We were told that 'no one could stand against this fascism'. After the state of emergency declared, people were afraid to do anything against them. However, we sit down at Yuksel Street and told people our stories one by one. Now, our struggle has been heard by the millions of people around the world. Our hunger strike made a hole through the darkness of the state of emergency. Our struggle delegitimised the decree laws. This is not a defeat, this struggle will not end unless we say 'this is the end'." said Gulmen.

"This is not just our struggle but thousands of people who were dismissed by decree laws," Semih Ozakca said, thanking all of their supporters. "I am proud my mother, she was taken into custody first time in her life during our resistance. My wife, Esra Ozakca, also started a hunger strike to support us. This struggle has strengthened our love" added Ozakca.

Gulmen and Ozakca lost weight tremendously during the 324-day hunger strike. Both have severe health problems. They will likely deal with the physical consequences for the rest of their lives according to the statements of their doctors.