

Protestan Kiliseler Derneđi
Association of Protestant Churches (Turkey)



11.06.2020

PRESS RELEASE

For the attention of members of the press and the general public:

We wish to inform you about the practice of deportation from our country, being applied in recent years particularly to foreign Protestants, which we are unable to understand and for which we find the reasons given to be incomprehensible. A large number of families have been given notice to leave Turkey, or refused re-entry, with the powerful but nebulous accusation of N82 (being a threat to national security) without a satisfactory reason or any proof whatsoever being given to substantiate this claim. The majority received no prior warning of such a deportation order or entry ban and had lived many years in our country; their lives were turned upside down by the sudden shock. It is clear that the principle of national sovereignty confers on every government the right to define which non-citizens may live or be present within its own borders. But constitutional rule of law requires that charges made must be based on evidence. The traumatic refusal of entry to our country based on secret intelligence reports stating that the accused attended completely legal and open church meetings is unacceptable. It is unbecoming for our country to take such action towards people who have no criminal record whatsoever and who have showed respect for our laws and public order while living without problems for many years in our country. Furthermore, a few new practices that we have come across recently make these deportation cases even more complicated.

For families where one spouse is not a Turkish citizen, an entry ban or making entry conditional upon prior approval (when in practice no one has been granted prior approval) fundamentally breaks the principle of unity of the family. In the most recent case Joy Anna Subaşıgüller, whose husband Pastor Lütfü Kerem Subaşıgüller is a Turkish citizen active in ministry in the church in Ankara, was denied renewal of her residence permit and given 10 days to leave the country. The couple have been married for seven years and have 3 children aged four and a half, two and a half and three months. Their children are Turkish citizens. Joy Anna Subaşıgüller has been resident in our country without any incident for ten years.

First foreign families were forced to emigrate without any solid proof being presented to them; now this is happening to families that are part-foreign part-Turkish. Will it be the turn next of Turkish citizens who are Protestant Christians? We perceive the continued issuing of deportation orders to be an unjust and inhuman practice aimed against Protestant Christians. We Protestant Christians love our country and pray for our country, and we do not deserve this treatment.

The Association of Protestant Churches (Turkey) calls for this practice to cease, for the cases of those who have suffered from this practice to be reassessed in the framework of basic human rights and our national and international laws, and for permission to be given for them to live in our country which they love so much.

Respectfully submitted,

ASSOCIATION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES (TURKEY)

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