



**Speaking at SOAS could be punished with a sentence by a Turkish court!**

# **Freedom of expression on Trial in Turkey**

## **Seminar and discussion**

Organized by **Kurdish Society at SOAS** and **UK Kurdish Studies and Students Organisation (KSSO)**

### **Kurdish activist and politician Mrs. Leyla Zana sentenced...again**

Leyla Zana, 1995 Sakharov Prize Lauréat, the first Kurdish woman elected to the Turkish Parliament, and former political prisoner has been sentenced again to 10 years in prison by a Turkish court.

**Come to discuss what we can do together to not allow this time her imprisonment!**

## **Speakers:**

**Prof. Marry Davis** of London Metropolitan University

**Mr. Muharrem Erbey**, Leyla Zana's Lawyer and President of the Amed (Diyarbakır) Human Rights Association (İHD)

**DATE:** 15<sup>th</sup> May 09 @ 6:00 pm

**VENUE: SOAS- Room G3** (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London)  
Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

**Leyla Zana** was sentenced to 15 years in prison in 1991 because of speaking Kurdish in the Turkish Parliament, which were claimed to be against the unity of Turkey. In 2004, after serving 10 years, she was released by Turkish authorities due to international pressure. Zana received the Rafto Prize in 1994 and the Sakharov Prize the following year. Leyla Zana has been banned from participating in politics in Turkey since her imprisonment.

“Despite Zana's sufferings and personal losses during the previous 10 years of imprisonment in Turkey, she has continued to speak on behalf of the Kurdish people, seeking a non-violent and democratic solution for the Kurds living within Turkey's borders.



Upon being convicted for another 10 years in prison, Zana told the EU Turkey Civic Commission, "The case against me is a violation against freedom of thought, and represents a threat to every Kurd in Turkey. The decision of the court is just another way to repress, silence and punish the Kurds. “ (IFEX)[1]

“She is indicted under the Anti-Terror Law and under certain articles of the Turkish Penal Code, as evidenced by her speeches made abroad between 2007 and 2008”[2]. This includes the speech she made at the Kurdish Society’s seminar at SOAS in May 2008.

We, Kurdish Society invited Leyla Zana and Prof. Mary Davis last year to talk about “the obstacles and options for a political and peaceful solution of Turkey’s Kurdish question”. The Turkish prosecutor has taken a legal action[3] against Mrs. Leyla Zana due to her speech at our seminar, chaired by Prof. Mary Davis.

Further information: **UK Kurdish Studies and Students Organisation (KSSO) [mc@kssso.org.uk](mailto:mc@kssso.org.uk)**

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[1] International Freedom of Expression eXchange

[2] REPORT ON OBSERVATION OF TRIAL OF LEYLA ZANA MARCH 31ST, DIYBAKIR Margaret Owen. Member Bar Human Rights Committee

[3] <http://www.firatnews.com/index.php?rupel=nuce&nuceID=3414>