

MEDIA ADVISORY

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TURKISH AMERICAN GEZI PLATFORM (TAGP) Condemns the Visit of Fikri Isik, the Republic of Turkey's Minister of Science, Technology and Industry

The Minister's visit March 17-23 to Silicon Valley and Tech Industry; a hypocritical effort amidst the Turkish Government's human rights violations on freedom of speech, access to internet, social media, and the right to assembly.

San Francisco, CA – TAGP announced today the arrival of Mr. Fikri Isik as a fabricated effort to divert attention from the human rights violations undertaken by the Republic of Turkey. The group asks for support in their effort to foster democracy, restore freedom of speech and improve the current education system in Turkey.

Mr. Fikri Isik will be visiting the SF Bay Area, March 17 to March 23. Mr. Isik will kick off his California visit at a dinner reception at the Turkish Consulate in Los Angeles, followed by a visit to Berkeley National Lab, Stanford University, and the Middle East Technical University's San Francisco location. The purpose of his visit is to reverse the Turkish brain drain, and is characterized as a frantic attempt to improve economic conditions in Turkey that are more conducive to innovation.

Turkey's ruling party AKP has been an emboldened human rights violator especially in the areas of freedom of speech, right to assembly, and protest. Most commonly known by the Western media, Twitter and YouTube have been shut down in Turkey several times, journalists have been imprisoned and demonstrators have been murdered by the Turkish police. In addition, news has been tampered with and the protestors were portrayed as terrorists by the Turkish government's media outlets. Maybe the most telling is that 42% of the 552 human rights violations cases sentenced by the European Court of Human Rights have been aimed at the Turkish government.

Turkish American Gezi Platform, a non-profit 501c3 organization, whose mission is to support human rights, democracy, rule of law and freedom of speech, unequivocally denounces Minister Fikri Isik's visit to Silicon Valley, California. Turkish Government wrongfully and foolishly fails to see the link between a free society governed by the rule of law and an environment that fosters innovation. Turkey's primary motivation to reverse the brain drain will no doubt fail unless individuals' freedom of speech is protected, and the current education system is improved, which is the world's third worst in math. The notion of such visits are nothing more than a touristic endeavor and waste of public funds until the barriers on free exchange of ideas and a free society are removed.

About TAGP: *An independent group of individuals united to support the Gezi Movement in Turkey, with the hope that these grassroots efforts will contribute to freedom, justice and democracy in Turkey.*

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WHO: Turkish American Gezi Platform
WHAT: Republic of Turkey's Science, Technology and Industry Minister, Fikri Isik's California Visit
WHEN: March 17-23
WHERE: Los Angeles, Berkeley, San Francisco and Stanford University
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