

Dear members of CUPE,

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the invaluable support and solidarity you showed in the campaign for my freedom.

I am writing to you from Istanbul, where I am living with friends but not yet fully free.

As you may know, I was given the opportunity to make my presentation before a panel of judges on June 15, 2021. That same day, following resumption of the trial, three accused politicians and myself were granted an interim release from prison. However, we are required by judicial order to remain in the country and must submit to and appear at the court as required.

While we are happy about this positive development, it is possible that the interim release order may be revoked at any moment if requested by the prosecution. I am unable to reunite with my spouse, friends, and colleagues in Canada. But I am strong knowing that I will make it to my home in Ottawa, hopefully as soon as possible.

I truly felt the privilege of being a member of my union, CUPE, and having the backing of Carleton University and so many other communities, organizations, institutions and individuals from the first moment I was detained in Turkey last September. It not only gave me tremendous strength and resilience during my imprisonment but also showed that unions matter, and democratic spaces of solidarity are how we can ultimately win. We have taken a very important step, and we have achieved it together. Now the struggle continues for my safe return to Canada.

As an activist-academic, I will continue defending the truth, believing that the rule of law, human rights, democracy, and freedom will have certainly won in Turkey, Europe, Canada and across the world. I am also looking forward to resuming my research, producing knowledge that is beneficial for young people and for social movements.

I extend gratitude to every member of CUPE who created a circle of solidarity and goodness around us, who created a feeling of togetherness, who grew hope for change.

Sincerely,

Cihan Erdal

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