



AFSV Statement on International Day of Education

January 24, 2024 — The Alliance for Shared Values (AfSV) joins the United Nations in commemorating the International Day of Education, which this year is dedicated to “learning for lasting peace” and the role that education plays in fostering world peace and development. Today is an opportunity to actively commit to educating the next generation of leaders to address challenges such as discrimination, violence, climate change, and the erosion of democracy.

Education is a human right. Hizmet volunteers have been committed to expanding educational opportunities for those with unequal access for years. Hizmet volunteers have established schools, universities, tutoring centers, and after-school programs to foster societal development, social justice, and peace.

But under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish government has closed Hizmet-affiliated schools in Turkey and abroad, denying students and parents the right to choose their education. As part of a massive purge, the Erdogan regime blacklisted roughly [138,000 students](#) from kindergarten to 12th grade and [40,000 teachers](#) because they were enrolled in high-performing schools founded by Hizmet participants. Erdogan has also shut down around [1,200 schools and 15 universities](#), expanding his persecution of his people to the education sector by depriving people of the right to education. Outside of Turkey, access to education across the world is under attack; in Afghanistan, the Taliban has [banned](#) girls from attending secondary education and university, while in Pakistan, [12 million girls](#) are out of school, and only 13% of girls reach the ninth grade. Schools founded by Hizmet participants in those countries and others like them have been closed or taken over under considerable pressure from Erdogan.

Today serves as a reminder that restrictions to education impact children and adolescents around the world and it is an opportunity for Hizmet participants to recommit to supporting and protecting universal educational opportunities to promote a more peaceful and just world.

About Alliance for Shared Values

The Alliance for Shared Values (AFSV) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as a voice for cultural organizations affiliated with Hizmet, a civil society movement inspired by prominent preacher and peace advocate Fethullah Gülen. The Alliance strives to promote peace and social harmony by helping reduce misinformation and false stereotypes about any or all ethnic, cultural and religious communities. To learn more about the Alliance, please visit www.afsv.org.

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