

Guided by the principles of democracy, humanity and relying on respect for human dignity, freedom, equality and other values defined by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we, concerned citizens, students and educators declare:

An Open Letter Regarding the Arrest of Secondary School Principal Fatih Keskin in Bihać

December 04, 2019

Respected Service for Foreigner's Affairs,

On December 3rd, after being summoned to the offices of the Interior Ministry of the Una-Sana Canton, the principal of Richmond Park School in Bihać, Fatih Keskin, was taken into custody. Mr. Keskin is a citizen of the Republic of Turkey, who until yesterday had permanent residency in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Only a few hours later, without seeing his lawyer, Mr. Keskin was transported to the immigration center in East Sarajevo. On December 4th, the Service for Foreigner's Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina revokes Mr. Keskin's residential permit based on alleged threats to safety and public peace.

We, the citizens who have had the opportunity to get to know Mr. Keskin, to collaborate with him and learn from him, are interested in details of how the described situation came about. Mr. Keskin is an exemplary resident of the city of Bihać, a wonderful husband and father of two Bosnian-born children, a professor who strives to pass on his knowledge, skills and quality to his students, a professor who leads the Richmond Park Bihać collective, currently the most successful educational institution in the Canton. He led five generations of students with outstanding results, both on domestic and international levels. His past students are today students of prestigious Universities, many of them are successful businesspeople in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Because of all that has been said, we strongly request of the Service, to formally and publicly announce to the BiH citizens as to why Mr Keskin has been deprived of his freedom.

The Bosnian-Herzegovian public has the right to know:

1. On what basis was Mr. Keskin summoned to an interview at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Una-Sana Canton of BiH?
2. Why was Mr. Fatih denied the right to an attorney after the detainment?
3. What is the reason for the cancellation of Mr Keskin's residence permit? It has been said that Mr. Keskin poses as a national threat to BiH's public safety: How was this concluded? Specifically, which acts and deeds of Mr. Keskin have contributed to this sudden decision?

There are many lessons and values that generations upon generations of students learned from Mr. Keskin. He taught his students that no matter what academic road they take and no matter the situation their country is in, it is their utmost responsibility to invest their knowledge into the welfare and improvement of society and their homeland. But how do you invest your youth and your knowledge into a country that thanks the very man who selflessly devoted his life to teaching and academics, by arresting him? How do we thank the man who spent his days teaching the values of freedom to youth – the very youth this country expects to be the hope for the future?

You can find the current list of signatories at <https://otvorenopismo.github.io/> (Bottom of the page)