



04.06.2013, Istanbul

Dear Friends,

We believe that you have been following the recent events in Istanbul and all over the Turkey. We, as TEMA Foundation, are a natural part of these events that started out of environmental concerns and would like to provide you with a brief information on the issue.

Gezi Park, one of the few green spaces left in the centre of Istanbul, is currently being planned to be replaced by a replica of Topçu Kışlası, an old Ottoman Army Barracks. This new building which is likely to host a shopping mall, is part of a series of urban transformation projects which constantly turns keynote buildings and public space in favor of malls, mosques, newer plazas and residential buildings in Istanbul.

Despite ongoing protests of environmentalist individuals and organizations, a court ruling on 31/05/2013 to stop the execution of the Topçu Kışlası project and the escalating demonstrations across Turkey for days, Prime Minister Erdoğan has announced that the project will continue no matter what.

Many environmental concerns have found voice in the support for Gezi Park such as the 2B law (which enables the sale of forest land), multiple construction of dams and hydropower plants in single river basins, chemical mining, major projects like the 3rd Bridge and 3rd Airport for Istanbul, plans for nuclear, coal and lignite power plants, changes in Environment Impact Assessment Directives, increasing of carbon emissions and the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Draft Law waiting to be adopted despite opposition by over 120 CSOs. TEMA shares these concerns and hence joined in with the sit-in organized by peaceful protestors with other CSOs and civilians.

What started as hundreds showing concern for an environmental issue quickly spread to hundreds of thousands in more than 67 cities concerned for their freedom and human rights as images depicting police intervention with excessive pressurized water and tear gas spread across social media.

We, as TEMA, join others and ask for your support in keeping Gezi Park intact and calling responsables to stop this unrest. The mainstream media has turned a blind eye on the demonstrations. That's why your international support is urgent and needed.

Sincerely,

M. Serdar Sarıgül
General Director and Executive Committee Member

