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Email: [NoUniPolice@gmail.com](mailto:NoUniPolice@gmail.com)

### **Petition- Signature Collection**

#### **Academics against the Introduction of Special Security Forces in Greek Universities**

The period we have been going through is critical and dramatic. The Covid-19 pandemic has thrown the Greek health-system into crisis, while the strict quarantine measures have drastically affected the economy, culture and education. In this context, the academic community was suddenly informed, through vague government statements and leaks in the mass media, that the Greek government has decided to establish a new security force under the name “Squad for the Protection of Universities”. This new security force will not answer to university authorities, as required by the autonomous character of universities. Instead, it will directly fall under the Greek Police.

The Greek government intends to introduce the relevant bill next month, without any prior discussion and debate with the academic community and institutions. Moreover, it intends to employ at least 1000 police officers to be placed in universities. Both the Greek University Rectors Council and the Hellenic Federation of University Teachers’ Associations (POSDEP) have already expressed their strong objections to the forthcoming bill; yet they have not been taken into consideration not even for the sake of appearances.

This is unacceptable. We declare that we will not consent to the operation inside the University of any guard or security force not subjected to the University community control. Similarly, we consider the funding of police forces for universities profoundly provocative given the scarce resources available to Greek universities for educational purposes, research and infrastructures. That the employment of 1000 police officers for universities follows a decade of understaffing in teaching, research and administrative personnel makes this provocation all the more blatant.

It is inconceivable that in the time of a pandemic, when the universities minimally function as physical sites for education and research, the government considers the issue of university police a priority.

We urge the university authorities, unions of academic and administrative staff, as well as students not to consent to the government plans for establishing one more “security force” (what has become a standard government practice), but to make every effort to prevent it.