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The decision to remove evolution from Turkey's national curriculum is going to be challenged in court, [according](#) [4] to the *Hurriyet Daily News* (July 2, 2017).

As NCSE previously [reported](#) [5], a revision of the national curriculum, in which a unit entitled "The Origin of Life and Evolution" was replaced with a unit entitled "Living Beings and the Environment," was recently approved by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. A representative of the Education Ministry was [quoted](#) [6] by the *Hurriyet Daily News* (June 22, 2017) as describing evolution and the origin of life as both too difficult for ninth-grade students and as "controversial."

In response, Mehmet Balık, the chair of the Union of Education and Science Workers, said, "Excluding the theory of evolution from the curriculum ... destroys the principle of secularism and the scientific principles of education. We will open a lawsuit against these regulations and take these implementations to court." Feray Aytekin Aydoğan, the head of the Union of Education Workers, added, "There can be no scientific education without talking about this lesson. Despite every kind of ban, we will continue to lecture on evolution."

Kerem Cankoçak, a physicist at Istanbul Technical University, [told](#) [7] *Voice of America* (July 3, 2017), "In the high schools evolution was already taught very badly, it was already being increasingly taught as hypothesis rather than a theory, if it was mentioned at all. ... So the complete removal of evolution was

expected. Already I see many students who don't know or refuse to accept it. But this latest change is part of a wider plan, natural sciences, philosophy, social sciences all cut back in the new curriculum."

The teaching of evolution has been periodically contentious in Turkey, owing in part to the efforts of Islamic fundamentalist groups and politicians.

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