

Statement by Selcuk KOZAGACLI, the president of Progressive Lawyers Association of Turkey (CHD) after the police raids as a result of which 15 lawyers were arrested.

Esteemed friends,

I have learned about the raids against our association, offices and houses when I was in Damascus, making interviews on behalf of our association. Our Central Office Board of Management member Lawyer Oya ASLAN is here together with me.

We are trying to complete our appointed interviews and we will be in Istanbul as soon as possible. It should be known, however, that it is impossible to intimidate even a single CHD member from her struggle with arrest threats.

Under the scope of an early arranged program, we have interviewed Deputy Prime Minister Kadri Cemil and Minister of National Reconciliation Dr. Ali Haydar and other authorities. We have carried out a series of meetings with the Syrian democratic opposition. We have listened the presidents of Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Agriculture. We have spoken to people. We gathered detailed information regarding the crimes of massacre, plunder and robbery committed by the armed attackers, primarily in the city of Aleppo. We have promised that we will become the lawyers of Syrian people in order to compensate their losses and the injustice done against them. We have promised that we will continue to be the lawyers of Turkish, Kurdish and Arabic people.

Recently, when I was invited to introduce the education program of our association, "The Usual Suspects", Cuneyt Ozdemir had asked me an interesting question. Mr. Ozdemir asked me if we are afraid of being taken under custody. My answer is still valid: we are not afraid of anybody and any threat in this country where all kinds of legal security are suspended under the pressure of the government. Those who receive the orders and execute them should know the fact that the real verdict about this attack will be given by the peoples of Turkey, workers, public workers and the socialist opposition whom we are defending.

Why are we targeted?

First of all I would like to indicate that, there is no need to find an illegality excuse for this operation. This is the CHD operation of the State. But, why did they do such an operation? It would be enough to review the last 10 years of our association and the court cases that we follow.

We are the lawyers of the revolutionaries, people in poverty, the families of the Kurdish children who were killed with police bullets, in short we are the lawyers of the oppressed.

We are the lawyers of Engin Çeber, who was tortured to death in the prison, the court case of December 19th, 2000 Prison Massacre, Baran Tursun, who was murdered by a police bullet, Çağdaş Gemik and Şerzan Kurt; we are the lawyers of the people Şemdinli whose villages were burned and who were subjected to summary executions, un identified murders of Cizre –the case of Cemal Temizöz- and the workers of Hey Textile who have been resisting for their rights, of the students who demand free education and of Nejla Yıldız.

This attack against us is the result of the fear and grudge of the criminal government that couldn't get rid of our chase and that oppresses the peoples of the region in collaboration with imperialism. Do you want to arrest us? You can easily do so while you have that kind of lawyers in the attorney generalships and in the courts. But you will be hugely mistaken if you think that these works will remain undone just because we are arrested.

I have a full confidence to my friends and comrades who are the members of CHD. I am sure that they will undertake the works that we are already working on, that they will keep all our branch offices and bureaus open and that they will do better than us in undertaking the responsibilities and duties because of which we have been attacked.

Those who will be ashamed and disappointed will be the attackers and their guardians.

Dear comrades, we will quickly complete all our interviews that we will do within the framework of our program and we will return by the beginning of the week.

I can guess that they were not even able to organize a proper accusation and conspiracy that would cause a concern among us. We are coming and I am sure that you will be there as well.

We are right and we will win.

With my love and regards.

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Selcuk KOZAGACLI

Lawyer

President of CHD