



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt
EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo
EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme
EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

WITH LAWYERS
IN 21 COUNTRIES

Equality Privacy Social Rights
No Racism Peace No Torture No War
Self-Determination of Peoples Civil Rights Democracy
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

London/Düsseldorf, 04 April 2020

ELDH Statement – solidarity conference with detained lawyers in Turkey

Yesterday evening, more than 70 lawyers from all over the world followed the call for a video conference in solidarity with lawyers imprisoned for political reasons in Turkey, with interventions from Ayşe Bingöl of the Turkey Human Rights Litigation Support Project, Barbara Spinelli of Giuristi Democratici, and Şerife Ceren Uysal, of the Progressive Lawyers Alliance (ÇHD). The lawyers unanimously called for the immediate release of the lawyers detained in Turkey. The lives of the imprisoned lawyers, including 7 lawyers of the ÇHD and 3 lawyers of the ÖHD, are acutely endangered by the spreading Covid-19 Pandemic and the shocking prison conditions in Turkey. 32 Turkish bar associations demanded on 19 March 2020 that the Turkish government takes appropriate measures to protect the lives of the detainees from the spreading C-19 epidemic and to release them. The bar associations explicitly mentioned lawyers who have been imprisoned for political reasons.

In the meantime, the Turkish government has decided to release 90,000 of the total of 300,000 detainees due to the spreading epidemic. However, persons who have been convicted of supporting terrorism are excluded from this measure. The lawyers concerned and their defence lawyers have all appealed against their convictions. They point out that the accusations lack any factual basis and were based on incorrect assessment of the evidence. This opinion was also shared by the participants in the video conference, many of whom had in the past taken part in the trials against the lawyers as observers.

The competent Turkish court, which had jurisdiction, initially had no reservations about releasing the defendants from custody during the ongoing proceedings. Only after a questionable exchange of judges was detention ordered again. There is

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therefore no justification for endangering the lives of the lawyers by the increased risk of infection due to the prison conditions.

Following the conference, outcomes include to organise and send representatives to a press conference targeted at Turkish and international media on 7 April, and to send faxes/emails to the Turkish Ministry of Justice pressurising them to release political prisoners.

Contact details of the Turkish Minister of Justice

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The conference was organised by the Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers (England), the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), the European Association of Democratic Lawyers (ELDH), the European Democratic Lawyers (EDL).