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Turkey

No Discrimination in the Judicial Reform Package / Equal Remission for Turkey's Political Prisoners

- News from around the world -
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This petition has been launched by Turkish activists.

Our country and the world are going through extraordinary times. As a rapidly spreading virus has concluded mass killings, governments have been taking severe measures aimed at ensuring public health and minimizing the loss of lives. For this reason, it is imperative to urgently take steps for Turkey's prisons, where more than 300,000 prisoners are locked up, and some 150,000 prison officials are working.

Turkey's incarcerated population has surpassed the country's prison capacity by 100,000 people. The prison facilities lack adequate isolation, hygiene, nutrition, and treatment capabilities. This situation poses a grave threat to the right to life of all the prisoners, which the state is under a constitutional obligation to protect.

Primarily, all sick, elderly, women, and infant prisoners should be urgently released. And the judicial reform package, as well as the penal execution bill, which are expected to be put on the Parliament's agenda in the coming days, should be designed in line with the constitutional principle of equality.

In a situation that requires the release of prisoners as a matter of safeguarding the fundamental right to life; a regulation that keeps behind bars intellectuals, politicians, artists and others who were imprisoned for "terrorism" for tweeting, writing or making music; will lead to further wounds in the public conscience.

As international organizations have been warning, tens of thousands of people today continue to face terrorism-related charges, which are in clear violation of principles of legality, predictability, lawfulness, non-retroactivity.

Tens of thousands who have not been involved in or promoted coercion and violence, have been accused of leading, being a member of or supporting terrorist organizations.

Tens of thousands who have had nothing to do with the criminalized actions have been investigated and prosecuted simply based on their views, in complete disregard of the individuality of the criminal responsibility.

In order to put an end to this unlawfulness, the anti-terror legislation should be relieved of ambiguity in a way to protect all individuals who have not been involved in acts of violence from terrorism-related charges.

A teacher was imprisoned for "disseminating terrorist propaganda" simply because she said, "Children should not die!" Hundreds of scholars known as "Academics for Peace" were arrested and sentenced to prison for urging the warring parts in southeastern Turkey to end fighting. They signed a declaration that said, "We will not be a party to this crime." Thousands continue to be held behind bars for expressing their views.

At present, over 50,000 journalists, writers, politicians, musicians, academics, human rights defenders, teachers, doctors, lawyers, university students, business people, and homemakers are incarcerated on charges of terrorism.

We demand the release of those in pretrial detention over such accusations in order to protect their right to life, either through the judicial reform package to be reviewed by the Parliament or through rulings to be directly delivered by the courts. As for those who are convicted, they should be able to benefit from the amendments. We also demand the

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removal of problems related to the anti-terror laws that are the root cause of all these injustices.

To sign the petition, and to read it in Turkish or German see [here](#).

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