



## **VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN TURKEY**

### JOINT DECLARATION

#### FORUM JUSTICE AND COURTS

Murat Arslan, president of YARSAV, Turkey's only association of judges and independent prosecutors recognized by the European Magistrates associations, was sentenced to 10 years in prison on 19 January this year.

On 9 October 2017, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe awarded Murat Arslan the Václav Havel Human Rights Prize of 2017, in recognition of his permanent commitment to affirming the independence of the judiciary and rule of law.

Sebnem Korur Fincanci, a lawyer and president of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, was also sentenced to 2 years and 6 months in prison for signing the petition "We will not be part to this crime" of the "Academics for Peace" group.

These are just two examples illustrating the fact that Turkey has become the largest prison of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and justice officials in the world.

After the political crisis of July 2016 and the declaration of a state of emergency, many of those who had dared to challenge the Turkish government's totalitarianism faced summary dismissals, arbitrary arrests, confiscation of assets and heavy prison sentences.

International observers present at the trials have denounced flagrant violations of fundamental rules of criminal procedure and gross unlawfulness, even in the light of Turkish law itself, particularly those seeking to ensure the impartiality of the courts and the rights of defense of the accused, showing that convictions are motivated only for political reasons.

In a few months, 4,463 magistrates and 1,546 lawyers were arrested and 2,360 magistrates and 600 lawyers were dismissed. Hundreds of magistrates and lawyers have been sentenced to long prison terms, including dozens of YARSAV members and members or Bar Associations.

These tragic numbers add to the dismissal, detention and conviction of tens of thousands of other academics, doctors, teachers, journalists, military and civil servants.



The legal and judicial community in Europe and the various representatives of national organizations of legal professions have noted, with horror, the inclement and unjustified purging of the Turkish justice system.

The situation is tragic and unacceptable, particularly in a Europe that claims to be a defender of human rights and of the basic civilizational rules that govern our collective life.

Thus, at this particularly serious time, the subscribers:

- Express their solidarity with Murat Arslan and all judges, prosecutors, lawyers and justice officials convicted for political reasons and subjected to inhuman and unjust treatment, together with their families, to whom they unequivocally declare their fraternity;
- Express deep concern to the serious violation of fundamental rules of democracy and human rights in Turkey;
- Call on all national and European institutions, within the judiciary, to suspend any initiatives or cooperation projects with the Turkish judicial system;
- Strongly urge the Turkish government to rapidly restore the rule of law in the country, by freeing the thousands of representatives of the judiciary unjustly detained and convicted.

Lisbon, February 4, 2019

President of the Bar Association

Guilherme Figueiredo

President of the Bar of Solicitors and Enforcement Agents

José Carlos Resende

President of the Professional Association of Portuguese Judges

Manuel Soares

President of the Union of Public Prosecutors

António Ventinhas

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