



President
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Presidency of the Republic of Turkey
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Külliyesi 06560
Beştepe-Ankara,
Turkey

E-mail: contact@tccb.gov.tr

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Dear Mr President

Arrest - Lawyer Levent Piskin

The Law Society is the professional body representing more than 166,000 solicitors in England and Wales. It aims to promote and support solicitors while upholding the rule of law, legal independence, ethical values, and the principle of justice for all around the world.

Lawyers for Lawyers is an independent and non-political Dutch foundation which seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession. We do this by supporting lawyers worldwide who are threatened or suppressed in the execution of their profession.

On 14 November 2016, in the early hours of the morning, Mr Levent Piskin, a practising Turkish lawyer, was arrested by the Turkish police in his home in Istanbul. Mr Piskin is alleged to have conveyed messages from Mr Selahattin Demirtas, Co-President of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), to the German publication Der Spiegel.

We understand that, on 5 November of 2016, Mr Piskin met with Mr Demirtas, in his capacity as Mr Demirtas' legal representative, in Edirne prison where Mr Demirtas is currently detained. It seems that Mr Piskin was arrested following this meeting. We are very concerned for the situation of Mr Piskin.

Turkey has been a member of the United Nations since 24 October 1945. We respectfully remind your Excellency that the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** states that:

Article 9: No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Turkey ratified the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** on 23 September 2003, which states that:

Article 9: Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

Article 10.1: All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

Turkey ratified the **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms** on 18 May 1954, which provides in its article 5 that:

3. Everyone arrested or detained in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 (c) of this Article shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorised by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release pending trial. Release may be conditioned by guarantees to appear for trial.

4. Everyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings by which the lawfulness of his detention shall be decided speedily by a court and his release ordered if the detention is not lawful.

The **UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers** provides that:

1. All persons are entitled to call upon the assistance of a lawyer of their choice to protect and establish their rights and to defend them in all stages of criminal proceedings.

2. Governments shall ensure that efficient procedures and responsive mechanisms for effective and equal access to lawyers are provided for all persons within their territory and subject to their jurisdiction, without distinction of any kind, such as discrimination based on race, colour, ethnic origin, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, economic or other status.

16. Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference.

18. Lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions.

We respectfully urge the relevant authorities:

- 1) to release Mr Piskin without delay
- 2) to allow Mr Piskin to have access to a lawyer
- 3) to ensure that he is treated in accordance with applicable standards while in detention
- 4) to ensure that lawyers and human rights defenders can carry out their professional duties without fear of intimidation, harassment or detention.

We shall continue to monitor the situation of lawyers and human rights defenders in Turkey and the situation of Mr. Piskin in particular.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Bourns
President
The Law Society of England & Wales
113 Chancery Lane
London WC2A 1PL
United Kingdom
Email: Robert.bourns@lawsociety.org.uk



Adrie van de Streek
Executive Director
Lawyers for Lawyers
P.O. Box 7113
1007 JC Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Email: info@lawyersforlawyers.org

Endorsement: Fair Trial Watch (FTW) is an independent and non-political Foundation established under the laws of The Netherlands that promotes a fair trial by trial observation, monitoring and fact finding missions.

cc.

Bekir Bozdağ
Minister of Justice
06659 Kizilay
Ankara
Turkey
Email: info@adalet.gov.tr

Mr. Abdurrahman Bilgiç
Ambassador
43 Belgrave Square
London SW1X 8PA
United Kingdom
Email: embassy.london@mfa.gov.tr

Mr. Richard Moore
Ambassador
Şehit Ersan Caddesi 46/A
Çankaya
Ankara
Turkey
Email: info.officer@fco.gov.uk

