



PRESS RELEASE

Turkey –Amsterdam, 7 April 2016

Lawyers Ramazan Demir and Ayşe Acinikli detained again

After the initial arrest and release of nine lawyers in Istanbul between 16 – 19 March 2016, new arrest warrants were issued against four of them on 22 March 2016. Two lawyers were re-arrested immediately after and were released a couple of days later. Yesterday, lawyers Ramazan Demir and Ayşe Acinikli were re-arrested.

Arrest nine lawyers

In the early morning of 16 March 2016, police raided the houses and offices of nine lawyers in Istanbul, Turkey. After the search, lawyers *Ramazan Demir*, *İrfan Arasan*, *Ayşe Acinikli*, *Hüseyin Boğatekin*, *Şefik Çelik*, *Adem Çalışçı*, *Ayşe Başar*, *Tamer Doğan* and *Mustafa Rüzgar* were arrested and taken into custody. The charges are unknown since the case file on the arrests is confidential. Allegedly the lawyers are arrested on suspicion of having ties with a terrorist organization.

KCK-Trial against 46 lawyers

All lawyers that were arrested represent the 46 lawyers who were arrested in 2011 on suspicion of “working for, or belonging to, a terrorist organization”. A hearing in the trial against these lawyers took place only one day after the arrests, on 17 March 2016. This hearing was postponed until 28 June 2016; the remaining lawyers of the 46 accused lawyers left the hearing in protest, with the consent of their clients, since they felt they were incapable of presenting an adequate defense whilst their colleagues were in custody. The hearing was monitored by a group of international observers, including representatives of Lawyers for Lawyers, Fair Trial Watch and the Dutch Bar Associations.

After the hearing, the lawyers and the international observers arranged to make a press statement outside the court house to protest the arrests. This was prevented with force by police in riot gear, who stormed the steps where the lawyers and the international observers had gathered.

Arrests relate to activities as lawyers

Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L) and Fair Trial Watch (FTW) have serious reason to believe that these lawyers, just like the lawyers in the KCK-case, were arrested because of their work as lawyers and because they represent clients suspected of terrorism or opposing the Turkish government. Another relevant factor seems to be that several lawyers have been pursuing ECHR-cases in relation to the curfews in cities in the South-East of Turkey.

These arrests fit in a climate in which the respect for the rule of law and the independence of the legal profession is quickly deteriorating. President Erdogan’s call for an expansion of the definition of a terrorist and to include MP’s, journalists, academics and authors as ‘supporters of terrorism’ underlines this. The lawyers who are being persecuted in Turkey deserve our continued and full support.

L4L and FTW are gravely concerned about the continuing judicial harassment of lawyers in Turkey.

L4L and FTW urge the Turkish authorities to:

- Immediately annul the arrest warrants against the lawyers arrested for the first time on 16 March 2016 and drop the criminal investigation;
- Abstain from identifying lawyers with their clients or their clients' causes;
- Put an end to all forms of harassment against lawyers in Turkey;
- Protect all lawyers in Turkey and ensure that they can do their job without fear of reprisals.

Note to the editor, not for publication:

Attachment: [Letter from L4L and FTW to the authorities of Turkey](#) dated. 18 March 2016

For more information, please visit www.lawyersforlawyers.nl

Ms Adrie van de Streek,

Executive Director Lawyers for Lawyers

+31 (0) 62 62 743 90

The Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation (L4L) is an independent and non-political Dutch foundation that seeks to promote the proper functioning of the rule of law by pursuing freedom and independence of the legal profession. L4L has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

Fair Trial Watch is an independent and non-political Dutch Foundation that promotes a fair trial for everybody and anybody around the world.

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