



June 18, 2017

Rex Tillerson
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Taner Kiliç

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

We write to express our serious concerns over the detention of Taner Kiliç, the Chairperson of Amnesty International Turkey, and to request that you issue a statement calling for his immediate unconditional release and dismissal of all charges against him. We also request that you instruct the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey to meet with Mr. Kiliç's family and to observe any court proceedings involving his case.

On June 6 Turkish authorities arrested and detained Mr. Kiliç, along with 22 other lawyers based in Izmir, on suspicion of involvement with the Fethullah Gülen movement. The authorities later charged Mr. Kiliç with "membership in a terrorist organization," citing alleged facts that do not constitute evidence of criminal conduct. The authorities presented no evidence to substantiate the charge other than the alleged presence of Bylock on his phone in 2014. Bylock is a secure mobile messaging application that the authorities say was used by members of the "Fethullahist Terrorist Organization."

Shortly after his detention, the State Department Spokesperson issued a [press statement](#) in defense of Mr. Kiliç, expressing deep concern over his detention as "the latest in a series of respected human rights defenders, journalists, academics, and activists detained in Turkey." This statement was praised by

the [Washington Post](#) editorial board as “making a welcome return to raising human rights issues.” In addition, the European Union, Germany’s Human Rights Commissioner, and Denmark’s Minister of Foreign Affairs condemned the arrest and detention of Mr. Kiliç,

Despite the widespread international condemnation, Mr. Kiliç was remanded on June 9 to pretrial detention where he will remain locked up for many months, at a minimum. Turkish authorities are refusing to release him and are pursuing baseless charges against a human rights defender who has served on Amnesty International Turkey’s board for various periods since 2002 and is the current board chair.

Mr. Kiliç’s detention takes place in the context of an escalating crackdown on human rights by Turkish authorities following a failed coup attempt in 2016. The government blames the coup attempt on Fethullah Gülen and has designated his movement a terrorist organization. This has paved the way for the arbitrary detention of thousands of people with no involvement in the coup attempt including hundreds of lawyers, journalists, and media workers. The detention of Mr. Kiliç appears to be part of a campaign to target lawyers for legitimate reporting on the deteriorating human rights situation in Turkey.

Given the serious and high-stakes nature of Mr. Kiliç’s detention, we urge you to intervene on his behalf by issuing a statement calling for his immediate unconditional release and the dismissal of all charges against him. We also request that you instruct the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey to meet with Mr. Kiliç’s family and to observe any court proceedings involving his case.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this request. Please direct any questions to Margaret Huang, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, at mhuang@aiusa.org.

Sincerely,



Rana Abdelhamid



Becky Farrar



Govind Acharya



Elizabeth Jennings



Donald Bierer



Janet Lord



Jan Black



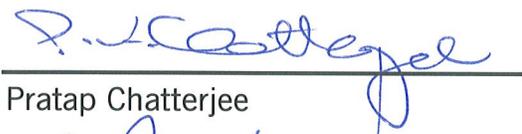
Terry Rockefeller



Ann Burroughs



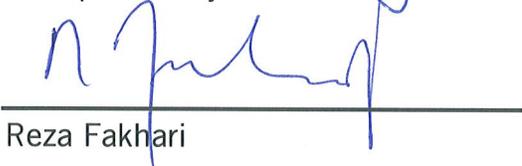
Adriana Sanford



Pratap Chatterjee



David Stamps



Reza Fakhari