



October 16, 2017

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
President of the Republic of Turkey
T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Genel Sekreterliği
06689 Çankaya, Ankara
Turkey

Dear President Erdoğan,

We are concerned about your government's continued actions to undermine human rights and democratic principles in Turkey. The prolonged state of emergency is gravely undermining Turkey's democratic institutions and the durability of our countries' longstanding strategic partnership, including more than half a century as NATO allies. Last year, the Turkish people defeated a violent and illegal challenge to their democratic institutions; today, the 15-month-old state of emergency poses a different threat to these same institutions, particularly the judiciary. By facilitating sweeping purges with no evidentiary standards, the state of emergency has upended countless innocent lives and undercuts domestic and international confidence in Turkey's rule of law.

In February, many of us joined over 70 of our colleagues from the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to appeal to you for the immediate release of American pastor Andrew Brunson, who has been held without trial for a year on baseless terrorism charges. We continue to be dismayed by your government's unwillingness to heed our calls for his release and the recent imposition of four additional charges on Mr. Brunson for allegedly conspiring to overthrow your government. These allegations are preposterous. We urge you to recognize them as such, drop all charges against Mr. Brunson, and release him.

Since the failed coup attempt, Turkish authorities have arrested a number of American dual citizens and two long-time Turkish employees at U.S. consulates on terrorism charges. Some of these individuals—including American citizen and NASA scientist Serkan Gölge—have been in jail for more than a year despite the prosecution's ability to present only circumstantial evidence against them. Our citizens have also been denied the courtesy of U.S. consular assistance that would help them and their families cope with these difficult and confusing circumstances.

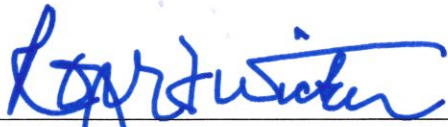
It is clear that terrorism charges under the state of emergency are also being manipulated to suppress the activism of a group of human rights defenders arrested in early July. Authorities seized a group of ten Turkish and international activists holding a routine human rights defenders workshop in Istanbul. The group of activists, which has come to be known as the Istanbul 10 and includes Amnesty International's Turkey Director, Ms. İdil Eser, is charged with "committing crime in the name of a terrorist organization without being a member." A month earlier, Amnesty International's Turkey Board Chair, Mr. Taner Kılıç, was arrested on charges of being a member of an alleged terrorist organization. Ms. Eser, Mr. Kılıç, and many of their colleagues remain in pre-trial detention.

We urge you to ensure the timely, transparent, and fair adjudication of the aforementioned cases, lift the state of emergency and immediately restore Turkey's commitment to international standards of due process and judicial independence.

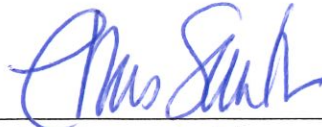
As a member of the Council of Europe and participating state of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), your country officially recognizes the rule of law as a cornerstone of democratic governance. Restoring respect for fair judicial treatment would remove a persistent distraction in our bilateral relationship and help to rebuild a principles-based partnership rooted in shared commitments to collective security, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

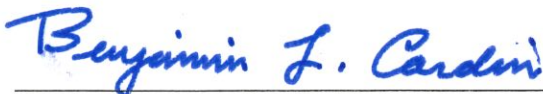
Sincerely,



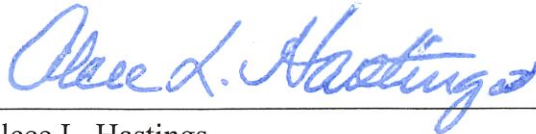
Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator
Chairman, U.S. Helsinki Commission



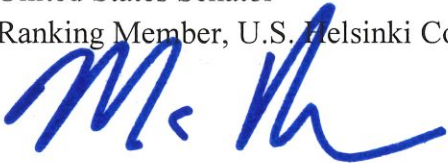
Christopher H. Smith
United States Representative
Co-Chairman, U.S. Helsinki Commission



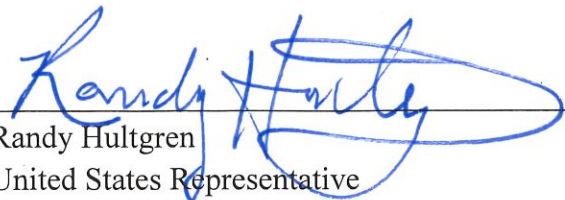
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator
Ranking Member, U.S. Helsinki Commission



Alcee L. Hastings
United States Representative
Ranking Member, U.S. Helsinki Commission



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Randy Hultgren
United States Representative

Thom Tillis

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Robert B. Aderholt

Robert B. Aderholt
United States Representative

Gwen S. Moore

Gwen S. Moore
United States Representative

Sheila Jackson Lee

Sheila Jackson Lee
United States Representative