

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 24, 2017

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Dear President Trump:

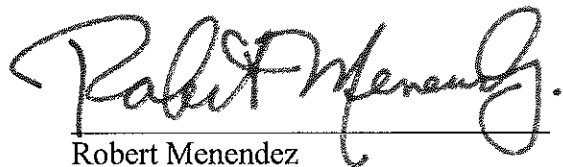
We write to express our grave concern about the continuing erosion of human rights and decline of democratic values in Turkey illustrated most recently by the arrest of Metin Topuz, an employee at the U.S. Consulate in Istanbul, and the attempted arrest of a third employee, Mete Canturk, who also works at the Istanbul consulate. Unfortunately, Mr. Canturk's wife and child were also arrested when officials were unable to locate Mr. Canturk at his home. This now accounts for three separate incidents this year that the Turkish government has arrested a Turkish staff member of our diplomatic mission with little, if any, evidence of wrongdoing. It is completely unacceptable for the Turkish government to arbitrarily harass or arrest anyone, especially employees of our diplomatic missions and their families.

We recognize Turkey's strategic importance as a longtime NATO ally and a traditional source of stability and democratic values across the Middle East and wider region. However, over the past several years, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his allies have corroded Turkey's democracy by mounting an assault on the rule of law, using sweeping state of emergency authorities to stifle fundamental rights including free speech, undermining the independence of the judiciary, and quashing any expressions of opposition. In addition to the arrest of our consulate staff, Turkish authorities have arrested top officials of Amnesty International, and sentenced Wall Street Journal reporter Ayla Albayrak to two years in prison in absentia.

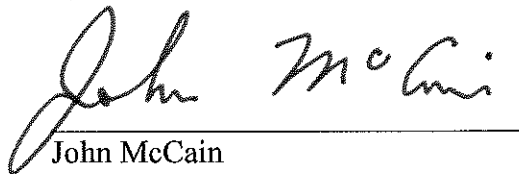
Furthermore, the Erdogan government is exporting this brutality to our soil. In May, a Pro-Erdogan group, which included Erdogan's security personnel, brutally attacked peaceful demonstrators in Sheridan Circle who gathered to protest the visit of President Erdogan to the United States. Nine people were hospitalized, and as far as we know, there was no disciplinary action taken against the security personnel nor a public condemnation from your Administration.

We support the State Department's decision to suspend non-immigrant visa services at our Embassy and Consulates in Turkey, but encourage you to take steps to mitigate potential impacts on those members of society who may rely on those services. We urge you to send a clear message to President Erdogan that the United States will not tolerate this type of behavior and that any cooperation must be based on a shared commitment to human rights and rule of law.

Sincerely,



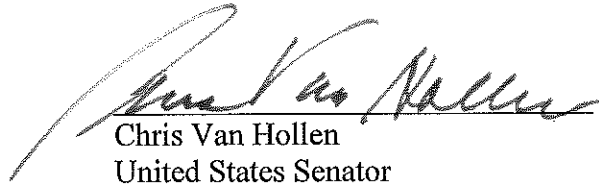
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



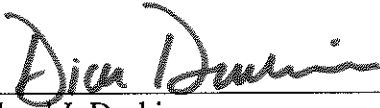
John McCain  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



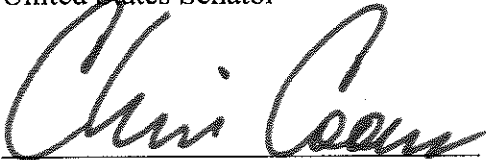
Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



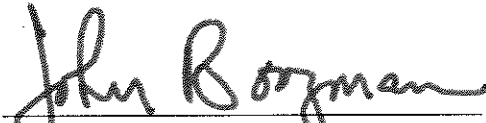
Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



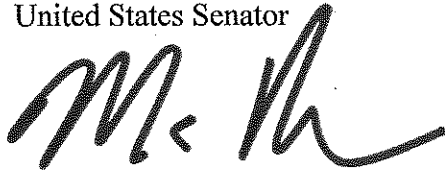
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



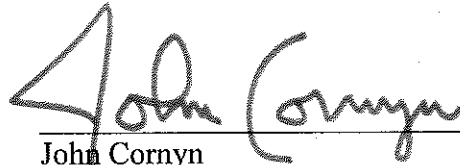
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



John Boozman  
United States Senator



Marco Rubio  
United States Senator



John Cornyn  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator