



ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

WITH LAWYERS
IN 18 COUNTRIES

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt
EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo
EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme
EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

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THE INDEPENDENCE OF LAWYERS MUST BE RESPECTED, AND THEY MUST NOT BE IDENTIFIED WITH THEIR CLIENTS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ESPECIALLY THAT OF ACADEMICS, MUST BE RESPECTED BY THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES.

ELDH is highly alarmed by the new mass arrest of Turkish citizens. According to Turkish media 320 Turkish citizens have been detained this week. Among them are lawyers, academics, politicians and students. They are suspected by the Turkish authorities of supporting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

It seems very likely, according to reports received by ELDH, that this is a new attempt to silence the opposition in Turkey. Academics for Peace, who had signed a petition to protest the government's military and political attacks and its consequences in many Kurdish cities, have been arrested, in some cases dismissed, and in many cases punished with disciplinary measures. This followed protests against the curfews imposed on several towns and villages in southeast Turkey, and against the violence of the police and the military. Since the Ankara bombing everybody who is suspected to have contact to the PKK is targeted. This includes lawyers who represent defendants who are allegedly supporters of PKK.

In the early morning of 16 March, police raided the houses of 9 lawyers in Istanbul, Turkey. After the search, lawyers Ramazan Demir, İrfan Arasan, Ayşe Acinikli, Hüseyin Boğatekin, Şefik Çelik, Adem Çalıışçı, Ayşe Başar, Tamer Doğan and Mustafa Ruzgar were taken into custody. They are all members of the Libertarian Lawyers Association (Ozgurlukcu Hukukcular Dernegi - OHD). According to the information received, there has not been given any justification for these arrests and searches. Some of the lawyers who were arrested represent the 46 lawyers who are accused of "working for, or belonging to, a terrorist organisation", the KCK. ELDH has

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been observing this trial from its beginning, and also observed the hearing in Istanbul on 17 March 2016.

ELDH concludes:

- Lawyers must not be identified with their clients, and the freedom of expression of all, especially academics must be respected by the Turkish authorities.
- The intimidation of the opposition in Turkey and the criminalisation of the Kurdish movement must end immediately.
- The dishonourable negotiations between Turkey and the European Union about the refugees can never be a pretext for tolerating such severe human rights violations in Turkey.



Thomas Schmidt
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