



Kurdish Lobby Australia



Providing Social Cultural Services

Statement about the imprisoned MPs and mayors in Turkey, 1 February 2017

In Turkey's June 2015 general election, 80 members of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) were elected to the Turkish parliament, marking the first time in the history of Turkey that a multi-ethnic pro-Kurdish party achieved parliamentary representation and the opportunity to participate in the country's decision-making processes. The HDP's policies of plurality and inclusion raised hopes of coexistence, peace and democracy, after decades of war and repression in eastern Turkey. But the HDP's parliamentary presence represented an obstacle to President Erdoğan and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) gaining an overall majority that was required to amend the constitution to an executive presidential system.

Any hope for peace was shattered in August 2015. Between August 2015 and December 2016, the Turkish state implemented 111 curfews and sieges in nine cities and 35 districts in eastern Turkey, sometimes for more than 90 days, causing the displacement of at least 350,000 people. Curfews, sieges and 'security' operations are ongoing. Whole neighbourhoods are being demolished, with many areas remaining 'forbidden zones'.

In this climate of fear, another general election was held in November 2015 in which 59 HDP representatives were elected to parliament. This election was followed by the failed coup in July 2016. Erdogan immediately declared a state of emergency under which there has been a massive purge of security force personnel, judges, lawyers, civil servants, university deans, academics and teachers, journalists, media outlets, NGOs, companies and elected pro-Kurdish parliamentarians and mayors. Suspensions from duty, sackings, arrests and imprisonments are being conducted without due process.

Between July 2015 and December 2016, 8,711 members of HDP have been arrested or detained pending trial. After losing parliamentary immunity in May 2016, 49 of 59 HDP MPs are being subjected to criminal investigations. Since November 2016, 30 HDP MPs have been arrested. Fourteen remain in prison, many in solitary confinement. In addition, 91 elected pro-Kurdish mayors and deputy mayors have been imprisoned since July 2016.

Kurdish Lobby Australia and the Kurdish Democratic Community Centre of Victoria call upon Australian parliamentarians to ask the following questions from the floor:

1. What is the Australian Government prepared to do in response to the imprisonment of elected pro-Kurdish MPs and mayors?

2. What is the Australian Government prepared to do in support of monitored negotiations between the Turkish state and Kurdish leaders to end the civil war?

3. What is the Australian Government prepared to do to ensure Turkey adheres to internationally recognized principles of justice and democracy?

Background information

Names and jurisdictions of imprisoned HDP MPs and mayors

List of 12 HDP MPs arrested on 4 November 2016

1. Selahattin Demirtas	HDP Co-Chair, Amed MP	
2. Figen Yuksekdag	HDP Co-Chair, Van MP	
3. Ziya Pir	Amed MP	Released on a bond
4. İmam Taşçier	Amed MP	Released on a bond
5. Nursel Aydoğan	Amed MP	
6. Idris Baluken	Amed MP	
7. Sirri Sureyya Onder	Ankara MP	Released on a bond
8. Abdullah Zeydan	Hakkari MP	
9. Selma Irmak	Hakkari MP	
10. Gulser Yildirim	Mardin MP	
11. Ferhat Encü	Sirnak MP	
12. Leyla Birlik	Sirnak MP	Released on a bond 4 Jan.

List of 18 HDP MPs arrested 5 November 2016 - 31 January 2017

1. Caglar Demirel	Amed MP	
2. Nimetullah Erdogmu	Amed MP	Acquitted 23-01-17
3. Altan Tan	Amed MP	
4. Nihat Akdoğan	Hakkari MP	
5. Besime Konca	Siirt MP	
6. Ayhan Bilgen	Kars MP	Released on a bond
7. Nadir Yıldırım	Van MP	Released on a bond
8. Meral Danis Bestas	Adana MP	Released on a bond
9. İmam Taşçier	Amed MP	Released on a bond
10. Ayse Acar Basaran	Batman MP	Released on a bond
11. Mehmet Emin Adiyaman	Igdir MP	Released on a bond
12. Huda Kaya	Istanbul MP	Released on a bond
13. Ahmet Yildirim	Mus MP	Released on a bond
14. Osman Baydemir	Urfa MP	Released on a bond
15. Dilaver Tashdemir	Van MP	Released on a bond
16. Necat Tanish	Van MP	Released on a bond
17. Adem Geveri	Van MP	Released on a bond
18. Lezgin Botan	Van MP	Detained 30 January

List of 14 HDP MPs in prison, 31 January 2017

1. Selahattin Demirtaş	Co chair, Amed MP	Edirne F Type Prison
2. Figen Yüksekdağ	Co chair, Van MP	Kandira F Type Prison
3. Nursel Aydoğan	Amed MP	Silivri L Type Prison, Istanbul
4. Çağlar Demirel	Amed MP	Kandira F Type Prison, Kocaeli
5. İdris Baluken	Bingöl MP	Kandira F Type Prison, Kocaeli
6. Nihat Akdoğan	Hakkari MP	Silivri L Type Prison, Istanbul
7. Selma Irmak	Hakkari MP	Kandira F Type Prison, Kocaeli
8. Abdullah Zayden	Hakkari MP	Edirne F Type Prison
9. Gülser Yıldırım	Mardin MP	Kandira F Type Prison, Kocaeli
10. Ferhat Encü	Sirnak MP	Kandira F Type Prison, Kocaeli
11. Besime Konca	Siirt MP	Kandira F Type Prison, Kocaeli
12. Lezgin Botan	Van MP	Detained on 30 January
13. Ayhan Bilgen	Kars MP	Rearrested on 31 January.
14. Meral Daniş Betaş	Adana MP	Rearrested on 31 January.

The first MP to be tried and sentenced was Diyarbakir (Amed) MP, Nursel Aydoğan. On 13 January she received a prison sentence of 4.8 years. Others face life sentences. Charges include encouraging people to oppose the government, criticizing the president, causing unrest and alleged links with the PKK.

List of 85 imprisoned Co-Mayors noting province and municipality, 31 January

1. Mukaddes Kübilay	Agri	Agri Metropolitan Municipality
2. Hazal Aras	Agri	Diyadin Municipality
3. Rohat Özbay	Agri	Doğubayazıt Municipality
4. Fırat Öztürk	Agri	Tutak Municipality
5. Yüksek Mutlu	Amed	Akdeniz Municipality
6. Gültan Kışanak	Amed	Büyükşehir Municipality
7. Fırat Anlı	Amed	Büyükşehir Municipality
8. Aygün Taşkın	Amed	Ergani Municipality
9. Abdurrahman Zorlu	Amed	Hani Municipality
10. Mehmet Ali Aydın	Amed	Kayapınar Municipality
11. Sadiye Süer Baran	Amed	Culp Municipality
12. Harun Erkus	Amed	Lice Municipality
13. Selim Kurbanoğlu	Amed	Yenisehir Municipality
14. Affullah Kar	Amed	Kocaköy Municipality
15. Abdülkerim Kaya	Batman	Gercüş Municipality
16. Zeynep Oduncu	Batman	Gercüş Municipality
17. Hüseyin Olan	Bitlis	Bitlis Metropolitan Municipality
18. Ahmet Demir	Bitlis	Ovakışla Municipality
19. Servin Karakak	Bitlis	Ovakışla Municipality
20. Mehmet Emin Avras	Bitlis	Güroymak Municipality
21. Özcan Birlik	Bitlis	Mutki Municipality
22. İhsan Uğur	Bitlis	Hizan Municipality
23. Felemez Aydın	Bitlis	Yolalan Municipality
24. Nurhayat Altun	Dersim	Dersim Metropolitan Municipality
25. Mehmet Ali Bull	Dersim	Dersim Metropolitan Municipality

26. Burhan Kocaman	Elazığ	Karakoçan Municipality
27. Cennet Ayık	Elazığ	Karakoçan Municipality
28. Tülay Karaca	Erzurum	Tekman Municipality
29. Mehmet Sait Karabakan	Erzurum	Karayazı Municipality
30. Zeynep Han Bingöl	Erzurum	Karayazı Municipality
31. Dilek Hatipoğlu	Hakkari	Hakkari Metropolitan Municipality
32. Nurullah Çiftçi	Hakkari	Hakkari Metropolitan Municipality
33. Hilal Duman	Hakkari	Çukurca Municipality
34. Servet Tunç	Hakkari	Çukurca Municipality
35. Dilber Uzunköprü	Hakkari	Esendere Municipality, Yüksekova
36. Adile Kozay	Hakkari	Yüksekova Municipality
37. Seferi Yılmaz	Hakkari	Şemdinli Municipality
38. Kasım Ağgün	Iğdır	Hoşhaber Municipality
39. Ali Çam	Iğdır	Hoşhaber Municipality
40. Ahmed Turk	Mardin	Mardin Metropolitan Municipality
41. Zeynep Şimşik(Şipçik)	Mardin	Dargeçit Municipality
42. Abdulkerim Erdem	Mardin	Derik Municipality
43. Sabahat Çetinkaya	Mardin	Derik Municipality
44. Emin Irmak	Mardin	Artuklu Municipality
45. Leyla Sevinç	Mardin	Artuklu Municipality
46. Leyla Salman	Mardin	Kızıltepe Municipality
47. İsmail Asi	Mardin	Kızıltepe Municipality
48. Süleyman Tekin	Mardin	Ömerli Municipality
49. Cengiz Kök	Mardin	Nusaybin Municipality
50. Sara Kaya	Mardin	Nusaybin Municipality
51. Yüksel Mutlu	Mersin	Akdeniz Municipality
52. Rahmi Çelik	Mus	Bulanık Municipality
53. Figen Yaşar	Mus	Bulanık Municipality
54. Mehmet Tanriverdi	Mus	Esentepe Municipality
55. Sabine Ekinci	Mus	Varto Municipality
56. Hüseyin Güneş	Mus	Varto Municipality
57. Halis Coşkun	Mus	Malazgirt Municipality
58. Memnune Söylemez	Mus	Malazgirt Municipality
59. Tuncer Bakirhan	Siirt	Siirt Metropolitan Municipality
60. Selva Erdoğan	Siirt	Baykan Municipality
61. Enes Cengiz	Siirt	Veysel Karani Municipality
62. Seyran Argan	Sirnak	Beytüşşebap Municipality
63. Nevin Oyman	Sirnak	İdil Municipality
64. Mehmet Muhdi Aslan	Sirnak	İdil Municipality
65. Kadir Kunur	Sirnak	Cizre Municipality
66. Rabia Takas	Sirnak	Başverimli in Silopi Municipality
67. Tahir Aytış	Sirnak	Başverimli in Silopi Municipality
68. Zeynep Üren	Sirnak	Uludere Municipality
69. Yunus Ürek	Sirnak	Uludere Municipality
70. Mustafa Bayram	Urfa	Halfeti Municipality
71. Zeynel Taş	Urfa	Bozova Municipality
72. Fatma Doğan	Urfa	Bozova Municipality

73. Filiz Yılmaz	Urfa	Viranşehir Municipality
74. Emrullah Cin	Urfa	Viranşehir Municipality
75. Halil Akbaş	Urfa	Suruç Municipality
76. Şerafettin Özalp	Van	Özalp Municipality
77. Handan Bağcı	Van	Özalp Municipality
78. Zilan Aldatmaz	Van	Saray Municipality
79. Suna Atabay	Van	Çaldıran Municipality
80. Abdurrahman Çağan	Van	Erçiş Municipality
81. Diba Keskin	Van	Erçiş Municipality
82. Abdulkерim Sayan	Van	Edremit Municipality
83. Bekir Kaya	Van	Van Metropolitan Municipality
84. Celalettin Bartu	Van	Çatak Municipality
85. Dr. Mehmet Ali Tunç	Van	Muradiye Municipality

List of six imprisoned Deputy Co-mayors, 31 January

1. Nazmi Çoşkun	Hakkari	Hakkari Metropolitan Municipality
2. Adile Kozay	Hakkari	Yüksekova Municipality
3. Hüsnü Beşer	Hakkari	Yüksekova Municipality
4. Hilal Duman	Hakkari	Çukurca Municipality
5. Ahmet Toloğ	Sirnak	Silopi Municipality
6. Turgut Babur	Van	Çatak Municipality

These elected mayors have been replaced by state-appointed 'trustees', who are closing down women's associations, charities and education facilities, sacking municipal workers and stopping the construction of new homes and roads.

In November, the Minister of the Interior, Süleyman Soylu, wrote to all governorates decreeing the gender equal co-chair system practised in over 100 municipalities a crime for which there is a prison sentence of up to two years. The dismantling of the co-mayor system impacts women's political representation and rights.

Erdogan's push for an executive presidency

Between 9 - 21 January 2017, the Turkish parliament debated and passed 18 amendments to the constitution to establish an executive presidential system. The amendments must be put to a referendum likely to be conducted in April, i.e. during the extended state of emergency. The amendments increase the number of parliamentary seats from 550 to 660, thus weakening minority parties; abolish the position of prime minister and give President Erdogan the right to remain the head of the AKP party and be the interim president. If re-elected, Erdogan can serve up to two five-year terms as president, from 2019.

The amendments give the president power to dissolve parliament at any time, dismiss legislation passed by parliament, issue legislative decrees, appoint and sack ministers, implement states of emergency, and appoint the heads of military and intelligence agencies, universities, senior bureaucrats and judges (including 12 of 15 judges in the Constitutional Court, and half those in the Council of State and the

Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors). If passed, these constitutional amendments have implications beyond the presidency of Erdogan.

International Consequences

The mass arrest of democratically elected parliamentarians and mayors, the Islamist sympathies of the AKP government, and the curfews, sieges and 'security' operations in eastern Turkey have crushed Kurds' hopes for achieving peace and democracy in Turkey. In Syria, the AKP government is similarly conducting policies of repression against Kurds and other minorities. By militarily attacking the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, insisting the representatives of Kurds and other minorities in northern Syria be excluded from political negotiations, and in supporting opposition militias that want to form a Sharia government, Turkey is undermining the fight against ISIS and any political solution. Hence, Turkey's current trajectory has far reaching consequences for international security, including the potential for mass migration, terrorism and war in Turkey, neighbouring countries, Europe and beyond.

As our democratically elected representatives, we urge you to try every means to help prevent the catastrophes that could arise from Turkey's current trajectory.



Security force demolition in Sirnak, December 2016. Source: <http://images.al-monitor.com/almpics/2016/12/GettyImages-623142584.jpg/GettyImages-623142584-570.jpg>