



CARTOONISTS RIGHTS NETWORK INTERNATIONAL

AN OPEN LETTER TO THEIR EXCELLENCIES

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOĞAN, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DONALD TUSK, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL

ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR MEETING AT THE 28th NATO SUMMIT, BRUSSELS, MAY 25th 2017

Your excellencies,

Turkey has been a member of the Council of Europe for almost sixty years and is party to the European Convention on Human Rights.

In a meeting with the European Committee on Foreign Affairs held in Strasbourg on May 15th Thorbjørn Jagland, Secretary General of the Council made the following statement with reference to journalists arrested in Turkey on charges pertaining to support for terrorist organisations:

“... there is case law [in the European Court of Human Rights]... that one cannot have a journalist in pre-trial detention for more than four months.”

Staff from the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper including our colleague the acclaimed and internationally respected cartoonist Musa Kart were formally arrested on November 5th 2016. They were finally indicted on April 4th 2017 – a gap of five months.

Last week they spent their two hundredth consecutive day in custody. When the first hearing of their trial takes place, scheduled for July 24th, they will be approaching the end of their ninth month. And their circumstances are far from unique; Amnesty International's figures indicate that a third of the world's imprisoned journalists are in Turkey.

By any measure of jurisprudence the protracted detention of these journalists constitute a violation of rights accorded to those awaiting trial.

Furthermore we reject the charges levelled against Kart and his colleagues, who have done nothing more than pursue careers in journalism.

We urge President Tusk and his delegation to press President Erdoğan on conditions for journalists and media workers in Turkey and remind him that, in the word of Sec.Gen. Jagland:

“... [the ECHR] has communicated to the journalists that their[s] are cases of priority.”

Finally we call upon President Erdoğan to consider his own words last year following the attempted coup against his government:

“I feel that if we do not make use of this opportunity correctly, then it will give the people the right to hold us by the throat.”

Time for Turkey to behave “correctly” i.e. like the robust, mature, lawful democracy and valued world player her friends in Europe know her to be.

Joel Pett, President, CRNI

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