



For human rights. Worldwide.



Society for  
Threatened Peoples

06.04.2020

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Human Rights Organization  
with consultative status at  
the UN ECOSOC and with  
participatory status at the  
Council of Europe

## Covid-19: Amnesty for political prisoners

Appeal to the President of the Republic of Turkey, the entire Turkish Government, and to all members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM)

Dear Mr. President, dear Sirs and Madams,

The Society for Threatened Peoples (STP), the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR), and several other signatories are sending you this appeal to urge you to release all political prisoners and prisoners on remand from custody immediately.

Prisoners are particularly at risk due to the Covid 19 pandemic – which is affecting more and more people also in Turkey – as they live in extremely cramped and often unhygienic conditions in the prisons, so that it is usually impossible for them to maintain a necessary safe distance and follow the hygiene rules. Their access to medical care is limited as well. If there was a disease outbreak in a prison, countless lives would be in danger.

We welcome the fact that the Turkish Government is planning to release up to 100,000 prisoners. However, the plans do not include a release of those detained under the anti-terrorism laws, prisoners on remand, or convicts with pending appeal proceedings.

This includes imprisoned journalists, writers, human rights activists, politicians, mayors and lawyers. However, persons imprisoned for political reasons should be released from prison as well.

The tens of thousands of political prisoners in Turkey would not be of any danger if they were to be set free. On the contrary, an amnesty could – at this time, in the face of such a monumental challenge – work as a sign of reconciliation and solidarity between all ethnic groups. In freedom, these people could make an important contribution to strengthening the promoting public health in the country.

At the same time, this measure would relieve pressure on the judicial system. There would be space available in the prisons, allow the remaining prisoners to observe social distancing, thus perhaps saving lives, and would also help to keep the security personnel safe. A humanitarian catastrophe could be averted. On the part of the Turkish state, this would free resources that are urgently needed to ensure sufficient healthcare for the society in Turkey during the coming months.

Please release all political prisoners from the prisons! In doing so, you are making an important contribution to the well-being of all people in Turkey.

With kind regards,

Martin Lessenthin, Spokesman of the Board of the International Society for Human Rights (ISHR)

Ulrich Delius, Director of the Society for Threatened Peoples (STP)

### Donations Account

Bank für Sozialwirtschaft  
IBAN: DE07 2512 0510 0000 5060 70  
BIC: BFSWDE33HAN

### Business Account

Sparkasse Göttingen  
IBAN: DE65 2605 0001 0000 0019 17  
BIC: NOLADE21GOE

### Registered Charity

Listed in the register of associations  
of the Municipal Court Göttingen  
under VR 1804





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### The appeal is supported by:

- Albrecht Kieser, journalist, Cologne.
- Alevi Cultural Center Cologne-Porz and surroundings.
- Ali Bostanci, teacher, Neuss.
- Ali Zülfikar, Art / Painting, Cologne.
- Armanc Nêrweyî, journalist, Berlin.
- Bayram Ayaz, writer, Bonn.
- Berivan Aymaz, Member of Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia, Alliance 90 / The Greens.
- Clemens Ronnefeldt, consultant for peace issues at the German branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.
- Democratic Social Center of the Kurds, Cologne.
- Dogan Akhanli, German-Turkish writer, Berlin.
- Dr. Gisela Penteker, Turkey representative for IPPNW.
- DR. H.C. HERBERT SCHMALSTIEG, retired mayor that of the Lower Saxony state capital Hanover.
- Erkan Pehlivan, journalist, Frankfurt am Main.
- Father Wolfgang Jungheim, Jesuitenplatz 4, 56068 Koblenz.
- Fatih Akin, film director, screenwriter, actor and producer, Hamburg.
- Faysal Dagli, German-Kurdish journalist, Hamburg.
- Heidi Merk, former Minister of Justice of Lower Saxony.
- International Journalists Association, Offenbach.
- Jazya Shahin, journalist, Berlin.
- Jürgen Grässlin, Federal Spokesman for the German Peace Society - United Opponents of Military Service (DFG-VK).
- Kimiea Shahverdi, pharmacist, Hürth.
- Kurdish Culture and Education Center, Cologne.
- Memo Sahin, managing director of the dialogue group "The time has come for a political solution in the conflict between Turks and Kurds", Cologne.
- Metin Incesu, Chairman, NAVEND - Center for Kurdish Studies, Bonn.
- Nevin Kamilağaoğlu and Hüseyin Mat, Co-Chair of the Alevi Union Europe.
- Prof. Dr. h.c. İsmail Çoban (visual artist), Wuppertal.
- Şakir Bilgin, writer, Cologne.
- Şêro Zeidan, activist, Berlin.
- Şivan Perwer, Kurdish artist, musician and songwriter, Bonn.
- Süleyman Ateş, pensioner, Cologne.
- Vartan Lulukjan, restaurant manager, Cologne.
- Vasilis Pavegos, employee, Cologne.

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