

TURKEY

RELEASE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CHAIR TANER KILIÇ

Chair of Amnesty International Turkey Taner Kılıç was detained on 6 June, wrongly accused of membership of the “Fethullahist Terrorist Organization”. On 9 June he has been remanded in pre-trial detention. The charges against him must be dropped and he must be released immediately and unconditionally.

Chair of Amnesty International Turkey and longstanding human rights defender Taner Kılıç was detained on 6 June on the basis of a warrant against him and 22 other lawyers the city of Izmir in Western Turkey. Taner Kılıç was detained from his home at 6.30am and taken to his office; both his home and office were searched by police officers, and he was taken into police custody. On 9 June, Taner Kılıç was brought before a prosecutor and charged with membership of the “Fethullahist Terrorist Organization”. He was remanded in detention pending trial. Fethullah Gülen, is a Turkish cleric and former Justice and Development Party (AK Party) ally. Turkish authorities accuse Gülen of masterminding a coup attempt against them in July 2016 and claim he is at the helm of the “Fethullahist Terrorist Organization”, an accusation he denies.

The prosecutor claims that ByLock, a secure mobile messaging application that the authorities say was used by members of the “Fethullahist Terrorist Organization” has been discovered on Taner Kılıç's phone. This so far unsubstantiated allegation is the sole piece of information provided to substantiate the charge. Taner Kılıç denies that he downloaded or used ByLock, or being a member of the “Fethullahist Terrorist Organization”. On the contrary, Taner Kılıç has been critical of the role of Fethullah Gülen's movement in Turkey.

The authorities have failed to provide any credible and admissible evidence of any internationally recognized crime. The detention of Taner Kılıç is therefore arbitrary. He is one of thousands, including political activists, lawyers, journalists and others critical of government policy in Turkey who have been subject to criminal prosecutions on trumped up terrorism charges.

Please send a letter, email, fax or tweet without delay. (Postage: \$2.50)

* Call on the Minister of Justice to drop the charges against Taner Kılıç.

* Urge him to ensure that Taner Kılıç is immediately and unconditionally released from pre-trial detention.

Here is the contact information you will need:

Minister of Justice

Mr Bekir Bozdağ
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanlıđı
06659 Ankara, Turkey
Fax: 011 90 312 419 33 70
Email: ozelkalem@adalet.gov.tr
Salutation: Dear Minister

Please send a copy to:

Parliamentary Commission on Human Rights

Mr Mustafa Yenerođlu
Commission Chairperson
TBMM İnsan Haklar? nceleme Komisyonu
Bakanlıklar, 06543
Ankara, Turkey
Fax: 011 90 312 420 24 92
Email: insanhaklarikom@tbbm.gov.tr

His Excellency Selçuk Ünal
Ambassador for Turkey
197 Wurtemberg Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 8L9
Fax: 1 (613) 789-3442
E-mail: embassy.ottawa@mfa.gov.tr

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Taner Kılıç is a human rights lawyer and longstanding campaigner for human rights in Turkey. He has been a member of the board of Amnesty International Turkey for various periods since 2002 and has been Chair since 2014. During his decades of work for human rights organizations in Turkey he has consistently demonstrated an unswerving commitment to human rights.

His detention takes place in the context of an escalating crackdown on human rights by the Turkish authorities, following a failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016. At least 47,000 people have been detained and tens of thousands of public sector employees have been dismissed. The authorities have targeted critical voices in the media and civil society; at least 120 journalists and media workers have been detained since the attempted coup, and hundreds of media outlets and NGOs have been shut down. Amnesty International has called on the Turkish authorities to cease their assault on freedom of expression and dissident voices, and allow media and civil society workers to carry out their legitimate work in peace and without fear of reprisal.

Arbitrary detention is prohibited under international law. The right not to be arbitrarily detained has been codified in Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Turkey has ratified. The notion of "arbitrariness" includes elements of inappropriateness, injustice, lack of predictability and due process of law, as well as elements of reasonableness, necessity, and proportionality.