

Brussels, July 06 2020

Mr. Josep Borrell
HR/VP of the European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200 / Wetstraat 200
1040 Brussels, Belgium

Object: A call for immediate action to stop Turkey's attacks against peace and democracy, in Kurdistan and everywhere

Mr Borrell,

We are writing to draw your attention to the repression of democratic political opposition in Turkey, especially the detention of MPs and Mayors from the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP); the Turkish invasion bombardments in Northern Iraq and Northern Syria in particular the regions inhabited by Kurds.

Over the last five years, President Erdoğan's ruling AKP has built an extremely authoritarian political system with the help of its ultranationalist allies and under conditions of emergency rule. In this process, over 90,000 people have been arrested with 'terrorism'-related charges, including party leaders, members of parliament, elected Kurdish mayors, thousands of other HDP party members, journalists, academics, lawyers, civil society representatives, human rights activists, and many more. The government has typically labelled anybody critical of its policies, particularly its Kurdish policy, as a terrorist or a traitor, and an enemy of the state. The "Turkish-type presidential system" has totally undermined the principle of separation of powers and an independent judiciary.

The Turkish Government's unlawful attacks are not simply directed against parliamentary democracy. They have also been unlawfully removing HDP co-mayors in Kurdish provinces, and replacing them with appointed "governor-trustees." Since the local elections held on 31 March 2019, the government has unlawfully seized 46 HDP-run municipalities out of 65. The European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) released its opinion no.979/2019 on 18 June 2020 and mentioned that it is incompatible with basic principles of democracy, the rule of law and foreseeability of the law.

We would also like to express our serious concerns about the continued shocking air strikes of the Turkish army in the regions of Sinjar and the UNHCR Makhmour Camp as well as other parts in South Kurdistan (Kurdistan Region of Iraq), which commenced on 14 June, and drone attack in Koban (Kurdish Region of Syria) on 23 of June 2020. In both attacks, many civilians lost their lives or seriously injured.

Since 17 June 2020, the Turkish military commenced moving ground forces into the Iraqi Kurdistan region, supported by drones and helicopters that hit more than 150 targets. This Turkish military action is destabilizing the region, exacerbating humanitarian suffering, and providing a fertile ground for the resurgence of terrorist groups, which will especially undermine progress made against ISIS. Furthermore, the continued air strikes could lead to the displacement of more people and force them to be asylum seekers in different parts of neighbouring countries or Europe.

Turkey is a member of NATO, a member of the Council of Europe, and a candidate country in the process of accession to the EU. The Commission should not tolerate these unacceptable actions against all democratic norms of national and international law. We ask you to take action against Erdogan's autocratic regime.

The EU faces also belligerent behaviour from Turkey in the Mediterranean Sea, going as far as the risk of confrontation with European ships belonging to the French Navy.

We cannot remain passive in the face of so much aggressiveness, including towards the EU itself.

We would like to request that the Commission take immediate and concrete steps, as economic and targeted sanctions, to help end this unlawful repression and attacks, as well as attacks against international law.

Sincerely,

ALFONSI Francois (Greens/EFA); ANDROULAKIS Nikos (S&D); ARVANITIS Konstantinos (GUE/NGL); AUKEN Margrete (Greens/EFA); BARRENA Fernando (GUE/NGL); BELLAMY Francois-Xavier (EPP); BENIFEI Brando (S&D); BIEDROŃ Robert (S&D); BILBAO BARANDICA Izaskun (Renew); BITEAU Benoit (Greens/EFA); BJÖRK Malin (GUE/NGL); BOMPARD Manuel (GUE/NGL); BOURGEOIS Geert (ECR); BUSCHMANN Martin (NI); CAREME Damien (Greens/EFA); CASTALDO Fabio Massimo (NI); CHAIBI Leila (GUE/NGL); CHRISTOFOROU Lefteris (EPP); COMIN I OLIVERES Antoni (NI); CORMAND David (Greens/EFA); CORRAO Ignazio (NI); D'AMATO Rosa (NI); DELBOS-CORFIELD Gwendoline (Greens/EFA); DELLI Karima (Greens/EFA); DONATH Anna (Renew); DURAND Pascal (Renew); FAJON Tanja (S&D); FOURLAS Loucas (EPP); GEORGIOULIS Alexis (GUE/NGL); GRUFFAT Claude (Greens/EFA); GUSMÃO José (GUE/NGL); GUTELAND Jytte (S&D); HEIDE Hannes (S&D); INCIR Evin (S&D); JADOT Yannick (Greens/EFA); KAILI Eva (S&D); KANKO Assita (ECR); KARLSBRO Karin (Renew); KONEČNÁ Kateřina (GUE/NGL); KOUNTOURA Elena (GUE/NGL); KUHNKE Alice (Greens/EFA); LOISEAU Nathalie (Renew); MAJORINO Pierfrancesco (S&D); MATIAS Marisa (GUE/NGL); MAVRIDES Costas (S&D); PAPADAKIS Demetris (S&D); PAPADIMOULIS Dimitrios (GUE/NGL); PELLETIER Anne-Sophie (GUE/NGL); PETER-HANSEN Kira (Greens/EFA); PISAPIA Giuliano (S&D); PONSATI Clara (NI); PUIGDEMONT Carles (NI); REGNER Evelyn (S&D); RIBA I GINER Diana (Greens/EFA); RIVASI Michèle (Greens/EFA); ROOSE Caroline (Greens/EFA); SANTOS Isabel (S&D); SATOURI Mounir (Greens/EFA); SCHIEDER Andreas (S&D); SIDL Guenther (S&D); SMERIGLIO Massimiliano (S&D); TOUSSAINT Marie (Greens/EFA); URBAN CRESPO Miguel (GUE/NGL); VAN OVERTVELDT Johan (ECR); VANA Monika (Greens/EFA); VILLANUEVA RUIZ Idoia (GUE/NGL); VILLUMSEN Nikolaj (GUE/NGL); YENBOU Salima (Greens/EFA); ZACHAROPOULOU Chrysoula (Renew); ŽDANOKA Tatjana (Greens/EFA).

Members of the European Parliament