

The Violation of Human Rights of Kurds in Turkey Must End Now!

The situation in Turkey's South-East region is continuing to escalate. The latest escalation of conflict between the Turkish government and Kurds in Turkey is both alarming and critical for Turkey, Europe, the Middle East and the rest of the world.

A full-blown attack against the Kurdish population is taking place under the label of "fighting terrorism". For several months now curfews have been imposed to many Kurdish towns and villages. In cities such as Cizre and Diyarbakir the outcome has many times led to the death of dozens of people. On the 8th of February 2016, 60 Kurds were killed in the city of Cizre by a Turkish military operation while in Diyarbakir at least 23 Kurds were killed. Human rights activist groups have also condemned the government for demolishing thousands of Kurdish villages and leaving as many as 1 million people homeless.

Furthermore, we see a worsening situation as far as tolerance of free and independent media and opinions of opposition politicians are concerned. Journalists are being convicted for criticizing the government's activity. Opposition parties and their leaders, as the Pro-Kurdish Party leader Selahattin Demirtaş, are being threatened to be prosecuted for "collaboration with terrorism" and "violent uprising". Imposing prosecutions on academics, politicians who declared their demand for peace or journalists questioning the Turkish government's armed support to Daesh (ISIS) is incompatible with the values of human rights, freedom of speech and press as well as democracy.

Turkey is one of the closest partners of the European Union and its Member States, as well as a NATO member. The European Union should not let Turkey use its involvement in addressing the current refugee crisis as leverage to act undisturbed in a manner suppressing the aforementioned liberties. Moreover, the European Union and its Member States should not be prevented to use diplomatic means to contribute towards putting an end to this ongoing violence, because of the current refugee crisis.

The civilian casualties and escalation of violence in Turkey must come to an end now and must be replaced by peace and dialogue. Turkey should be

diplomatically pushed to participate in the struggle against Daesh, for a reconciliation in Turkey and follow a human rights-based policy in which the European Union, OSCE and the Council of Europe should play a leading role.

We therefore call for:

- an immediate ceasefire between the Turkish government and the Kurds in the Turkish Parts;
- a retreat of the Turkish army from areas populated by civilians;
- an international monitoring and peace-keeping mission in Turkey's South-East region;
- an international independent investigation into human rights violations in Turkey's South-East region.

Human Rights are universal rights – for each people and in every region in the world!

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