



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان



TURKEY: STOP JUDICIAL HARASSMENT AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

Copenhagen, Ankara – 14 February 2013: A delegation of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) was in Ankara from 11 to 14 February 2013¹ where it met with its member organisation IHD, the Ministry of Justice, the National Human Rights Institute, the EU Delegation and representatives of the European Parliament. The EMHRN delegation visited and expressed its solidarity with and confidence in its Executive Committee member Osman ISCI, currently being held on charges of membership of an illegal organisation as a result of his trade union activities and position as human rights defender. He and 71 others charged with the same offences should be put on trial shortly, 28 of them after 8 months of pre-trial detention.

The EMHRN and IHD condemn the now-systematic use of accusations of membership of an illegal organization in proceedings that flout every requirement of a fair trial as the European Court of Human Rights has pointed out in many condemnations of Turkey.

These prosecutions form part of a pattern of general intimidation reflected in a series of trials of MPs, journalists, lawyers, trade unionists and human rights defenders in which the government is trampling on due process of law, freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to organize in trade unions and the rights of minorities.

The new set of reforms that will purportedly preclude such misuse of the court system offers no reassurance as previous reforms have failed to do so and those heralded unfortunately go no further than promises or fall far short of what is needed.

To build a sound democracy the Turkish authorities must stop misusing the judicial system as a means of silencing political dissent. The government must without further delay bring its criminal law into compliance with the international human rights instruments ratified by Turkey and put an end to these political trials.

The EMHRN and IHD call on the EU to take this situation into account not only in the ongoing accession negotiations but also straight away in the implementation of its neighbourhood policy.

Because a democratic Turkey has a rightful place within the European Union, it is particularly important for EU governments and the Union itself to give their resolute support to those struggling for more democracy in Turkey and to keep reminding the Turkish authorities of their duty to live up to their international human rights obligations.

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For more information on EMHRN, visit www.euromedrights.org

For more information on IHD, visit <http://www.ihd.org.tr/>

¹ The delegation was composed of Michel TUBIANA, EMHRN President, and EMHRN Executive Committee members Mahmoud ABU RAHMA, Isaiás BARREÑADA, Anitta KYNSILEHTO and Eugenia PAPAMAKARIOU.