



22 February 2021

HDP under even more political pressure

There has been a severe increase in political pressure against the HDP, including cases of torture. This comes despite the ECtHR's ruling on the release of Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş, with its expectation of immediate implementation by the government, and discussion of new reforms in Turkey. A detention warrant has been issued against more than 700 people, and we now face severe anti-democratic practices against our deputies and co-mayors. The following three examples illustrate the pressure we are under.

Strip-search and beating of former co-mayor, leaving her too incapacitated to plead in court

The HDP's former co-mayor of Hakkari, Ms. Dilek Hatipoğlu, was sentenced to 16 years and 3 months in prison on 25 March 2016, and her sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court. On 12 February, Ms. Hatipoğlu was transferred from Sincan Prison to Van T-Type Prison, where she underwent strip-search torture. The guards told her to undress at the entrance of the prison. When she refused to undress, she was severely beaten by three guards at a spot hidden from cameras, all her clothes were removed, and she was subjected to a strip-search. On 19 February, she was taken to court for the hearing of another legal case against her. She had a visible black eye and was unable to plead due to the impacts on her health of the battering she had received.

Summaries of proceedings to lift parliamentary immunity prepared against a further nine HDP deputies, including HDP co-chair, Ms Pervin Buldan

On 19 February, Turkish prosecutors announced that they have prepared summaries of proceedings against nine HDP deputies, including co-chair Ms. Pervin Buldan, over the Kobane investigation, and have submitted them to the Justice Ministry. On 2 October 2020, 17 HDP politicians had been arrested on the grounds of their role in the Kobane protests. Jailed former Co-chairs Mr. Selahattin Demirtaş and Ms. Figen Yüksekdağ are also being tried in Kobane case. In 2014 the HDP called on people to protest in support of Kobani, which was under attack by ISIS. The protests were opposed by the state security forces and elements sympathetic to ISIS, and 43 people died, almost all supporters of HDP. For calling people to protest, HDP members are being accused of terrorism, and also of murder of those who died. These were the charges made against Selahattin Demirtaş that the ECtHR judged not to be a convincing case. The deputies under attack now are Garo Paylan, Huda Kaya, Sezai Temelli, Pero Dunder, Fatma Kurtulan, Serpil Kemalbay, deputy chairpersons of the HDP's parliamentary group: Meral Danis Bestas and Hakkı Saruhan Oluç, and co-chair Pervin Buldan. Since the general elections in 2018, more than 800 summaries of proceedings have been brought to the Turkish Parliament for HDP deputies.

Court of Cassation approves HDP deputy's 2-year prison sentence for a social media post, opening the way for him to be barred from parliamentary membership

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On the same day that the summaries of proceedings were sent to Parliament, the Court of Cassation approved the prison sentence of the HDP deputy for Kocaeli, Mr Ömer Faruk Gergerliođlu, opening the way for him to be barred from parliamentary membership. Mr Gergerliođlu has been found guilty of ‘making terrorist propaganda’ on the basis of a social media post. He was sentenced to 2 years and 6 months in prison by the Kocaeli 2nd Heavy Penal Court in February 2018, and was subsequently elected as an MP in June that year. The case was taken to the 16th Penal Chamber of the Court of Cassation after the İstanbul Regional Court of Justice rejected an appeal. Already, on 4 June 2020, Hakkari Deputy Leyla Güven and Diyarbakır Deputy Musa Farisođlu had their parliamentary status revoked after convictions against them became final. It is probable that Mr Gergerliođlu will also lose his parliamentary membership due to this final prison sentence against him.

Despite all kinds of political pressure, the HDP is committed to continue its struggle for peace and democracy. No matter how much pressure is exerted by the AKP-MHP ultra-nationalist alliance on the HDP, we will keep the promise that we have given to our people to do all we can to achieve a democratic, peaceful country.

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