



Plenary sitting

B8-0103/2018

5.2.2018

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 123(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the current human rights situation in Turkey
(2018/2527(RSP))

**Cristian Dan Preda, Renate Sommer, David McAllister, Julia Pitera,
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on behalf of the PPE Group

**European Parliament resolution on the current human rights situation in Turkey
(2018/2527(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Turkey,
 - having regard to the 2016 annual report on Turkey, published by the Commission on 9 November 2016 (SWD (2016)0366),
 - having regard to Resolution 2156 (2017) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on the functioning of democratic institutions in Turkey,
 - having regard to the statement by Vice-President / High Representative Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn a year after the coup attempt in Turkey of 14 July 2017,
 - having regard to the EU-Turkey High Level Political Dialogue of 25 July 2017,
 - having regard to the statement by the Spokesperson of the European External Action Service of 26 October 2017 on ongoing human rights cases in Turkey,
 - having regard to the statement by Vice-President / High Representative Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn of 2 February 2018 on the latest developments in Turkey,
 - having regard to the right to freedom of expression enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Turkey is a state party,
 - having regard to Rule 123(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Turkey is an important partner of the EU and is expected as a candidate country to uphold the highest standards of democracy, including respect for human rights, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms and the universal right to a fair trial;
- B. whereas there has been a worrying pattern of imprisonment of a large number of members of the democratic opposition, journalists, human rights defenders, lawyers, civil society representatives and academics in Turkey;
- C. whereas among the human rights defenders prosecuted are the Chair of Amnesty International in Turkey, Taner Kılıç, and the so-called Istanbul 10: Idil Eser, Özlem Dalkıran, Günel Kurşun, Veli Acı, Ali Gharavi, Peter Steudtner, İlknur Üstün, Şeyhmus Özbekli, Nejat Taştan and Nalan Erkem;
- D. whereas the recent detention of peace activist Osman Kavala, an advocate of good EU-Turkey relations, is the latest among worrying cases;

- E. whereas Leyla Zana, a Member of the Turkish Parliament and Sakharov Prize Laureate in 1995, has regrettably been stripped of her status as a Member of Parliament by a vote in the Turkish Parliament on the grounds that she did not take her parliamentary oath in accordance with Article 81 of the Constitution and did not attend 212 sessions since her election in November 2015;
- F. whereas the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş, who is in detention together with HDP co-chair Figen Yüksekdağ, was not allowed to appear in court for security reasons;
- G. whereas journalist Deniz Yücel (Die Welt) has been held in prison since 27 February 2017 without any indictment;
- H. whereas on 18 January 2018 the Turkish Parliament extended the state of emergency in Turkey for another three months; whereas the Turkish Government's repressive measures under the state of emergency are disproportionate and in breach of basic rights and freedoms protected by the Turkish Constitution, of the democratic values upon which the European Union is founded, and of the ICCPR;
- I. whereas, in view of the situation in Turkey as regards democracy, the rule of law, human rights and press freedom, Turkey's pre-accession funds have been cut by EUR 105 million compared to the Commission's initial proposal for the 2018 EU budget, with a further EUR 70 million held in reserve until the country makes 'measurable sufficient improvements' in these fields;
- J. whereas the European Union and the European Parliament have strongly condemned the failed military coup in Turkey and recognised the legitimate responsibility of the Turkish authorities to prosecute those responsible and involved in this attempt;
- K. whereas Turkey launched a new air and ground operation, called 'Operation Olive Branch', in Afrin in Syria on 19 January to oust the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG); whereas the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy said she was worried for two main reasons: 'one side is the humanitarian one – we need to make sure that humanitarian access is guaranteed and that the civilian population and people are not suffering from military activities on the ground' and that the operation 'can undermine seriously the resumption of talks in Geneva, which is what, we believe, could really bring sustainable peace and security for Syria';
1. Expresses its deep concern about the human rights situation in Turkey; underlines that freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association are fundamental pillars of a democratic society, and that fundamental freedoms must be fully respected;
 2. Condemns the use of arbitrary detention and judicial and administrative harassment; calls on the Turkish Government to reverse the trend of continued dismissals, suspensions and arrests, including those of human rights defenders, journalists, elected representatives, lawyers, civil society representatives and academics; stresses that these persons should be able to carry out their legitimate activities;
 3. Is deeply concerned about reports of ill-treatment and torture of prisoners;

4. Urges the Turkish Government to lift the state of emergency immediately;
5. Calls on the Turkish authorities to respect the European Convention on Human Rights and the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, including the principle of presumption of innocence;
6. Is seriously concerned about the decision to ignore the ruling of Turkey's Constitutional Court regarding the release of the journalists Mehmet Altan and Sahin Alpay; notes that this constitutes a further deterioration of the rule of law;
7. Strongly condemns the attempted coup in Turkey of 15 July 2016; acknowledges the right and responsibility of the Turkish Government to respond to the coup attempt;
8. Stresses, however, that the failed military takeover cannot be used as an excuse for the Turkish Government to stifle legitimate and peaceful opposition and to prevent journalists and the media in their peaceful exercise of freedom of expression through disproportionate and illegal actions and measures;
9. Calls on the Turkish authorities to immediately release and stop the prosecution of human rights defenders, including Taner Kılıç, journalists, including Deniz Yücel, elected representatives, lawyers and civil society representatives, including Osman Kavala, and academics, who are being held without compelling evidence of criminal activity; calls on the Turkish authorities to acquit human rights defenders Idil Eser, Özlem Dalkıran, Günel Kurşun, Veli Acı, Ali Gharavi, Peter Steudtner, İlknur Üstün, Şeyhmus Özbekli, Nejat Taştan and Nalan Erkem;
10. Is seriously concerned about the lack of respect for the freedom of religion and about increased discrimination against Christians; deplores the Turkish Government's intention to construct the so-called 'İlşudam' in the upper reaches of the Tigris, which will put the originally Christian Aramean city of Hasankeyf underwater; condemns the confiscation of 50 Aramean churches, monasteries and cemeteries in Mardin; calls on the Commission to urgently address these issues with the Turkish authorities;
11. Notes with concern that a quarter of judges and prosecutors, a tenth of the police force, 110 000 officials and nearly 5 000 academics have been dismissed since July 2016, which is impeding the running of the administration, daily civil services and universities;
12. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, and the Government and Parliament of Turkey.