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*Plenary sitting*

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**B9-0048/2019**

17.9.2019

## **MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION**

with request for inclusion in the agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law

pursuant to Rule 144 of the Rules of Procedure

on the situation in Turkey, notably the removal of elected mayors  
(2019/2821(RSP))

**Anna Fotyga, Raffaele Fitto, Ruža Tomašić, Jadwiga Wiśniewska,  
Valdemar Tomaševski, Veronika Vrecionová, Assita Kanko, Jan Zahradil,  
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on behalf of the ECR Group

**B9-0048/2019**

**European Parliament resolution on the situation in Turkey, notably the removal of elected mayors  
(2019/2821(RSP))**

*The European Parliament,*

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- having regard to its previous resolutions on Turkey, in particular those of 8 February 2018 on the current human rights situation in Turkey<sup>1</sup>, and of 13 March 2019 on the 2018 Commission Report on Turkey<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the European Charter of Local Self-Government,
  - having regard to the statement of the EEAS Spokesperson of 19 August 2019 on the suspensions of elected mayors and detainment of hundreds of people in south-east Turkey,
  - having regard to Rule 144 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Turkish Law on Municipalities was changed in September 2016 under a state of emergency decree to facilitate the removal of mayors accused of terrorism links and their substitution by provincial governors;
- B. whereas 94 mayors from the pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP) were subsequently removed, and many were held in prolonged pretrial detention;
- C. whereas in February 2019 in a speech in advance of the March local elections, president Erdogan stated that mayors found to be linked with terrorism could be removed once again;
- D. whereas on 19 August 2019, the Turkish Interior Ministry removed three democratically elected mayors in the major municipalities of the Kurdish-majority south-east and eastern regions, and replaced them by government-appointed provincial governors on the ground that they are currently under criminal investigations for terrorism-related charges; whereas the three elected mayors from the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) are the mayor of Diyarbakir Adnan Selçuk Mizrakli, who won 63 percent of the vote in the March 31 local election, the mayor of Mardin Ahmet Türk, who won 56 percent of the vote, and the mayor of Van Bedia Özgökçe Ertan, who won 53 percent of the vote;
- E. whereas the charges reportedly include renaming local streets and parks after imprisoned PKK members and offering jobs to relatives of militants and other links to the PKK, which is listed as a terrorist group in Turkey, the US and the EU, where the Council has brought an appeal against the judgment of the General Court of 15 November 2018;

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<sup>1</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2018)0040

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted, P8\_TA(2019)0200

- F. whereas several public demonstrations organised against the removal of the mayors have been prohibited on security grounds, and those that have taken place have resulted in forceful dispersal by police, often with mass detentions and prosecution of participants; whereas this is the result of legislation introduced immediately after the lifting of the state of emergency;
- G. whereas the Turkish government has a legitimate right to fight terrorism, it is also responsible for ensuring that this is done in accordance with the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Turkish constitution and in Turkey's international commitments;
- H. whereas dismissals and detentions of local politicians and appointment of trustees put the respect of the democratic outcomes of the 31 March elections into question, deprive voters of political representation at local level, and seriously risk damaging local democracy;
- I. whereas on 6 September 2019 prominent opposition figure Canan Kaftancıoğlu, the head of the Republican People's Party (CHP) in Istanbul who played a significant role in the municipal elections that saw the CHP take over the mayoralty in Istanbul, was convicted of insulting the president and spreading terrorist propaganda in social media posts, and sentenced to 9 years and 8 months in prison;
- J. whereas the purge of the judiciary and the prosecutions of lawyers during the state of emergency seem to have seriously undermined the ability of the Turkish criminal justice system to deliver fair and impartial trials; whereas the judiciary in Turkey seems to be subjected to increasing political interference and is being used as a tool to suppress critical voices and to intimidate human rights defenders;
1. Calls on the Turkish authorities to reinstate mayor of Diyarbakir Adnan Selçuk Mizrakli, mayor of Mardin Ahmet Türk, and mayor of Van Bedia Özgökçe Ertan if the terrorism-related charges against them would be proven to be unfounded and to repeal all measures inhibiting the functioning of local democracy;
  2. Insists that the Turkish authorities put an end to all forms of harassment, including at judicial level, against all political opponents, elected members of the Turkish Parliament, and human rights defenders;
  3. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy, the Member States, the Government of Turkey and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey.