



Plenary sitting

B9-0084/2019

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))

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on behalf of the Renew Group

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

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions, notably the resolution on the situation of journalists in Turkey, adopted on 26 October 2016; the resolution on EU-Turkey relations, adopted on 24 November 2016, the resolution of 6 July 2017 on the 2016 Commission report on Turkey; the resolution of 8 February 2018 on the current human rights situation in Turkey; having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2019 on the 2018 Commission Report on Turkey;
 - having regard to Turkish membership of the Council of Europe, since 9 August 1949, which binds Turkey to the European Convention on Human Rights and the rulings of the ECHR;
 - having regard to Turkish membership of the United Nations and the UN Charter making the promotion and protection of human rights a key purpose;
- A. whereas Canan Kaftancıoğlu of Turkey's main opposition party, the Republican People's Party, CHP, was sentenced to nearly 10 years in prison in September 2019, after having played a key role in the victory of the CHP earlier this year when the ruling Justice and Development Party for the first time in 25 years lost power in Turkey's biggest city Istanbul;
- B. whereas the charges against Mrs Kaftancıoğlu are based on social media posts between 2012-2017, leading to accusations of insulting the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and for spreading a terrorist agenda, insulting a public official, humiliating the state and for inciting people to hatred; whereas the charges included posts on social media criticizing the killings of three Kurdish women affiliated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK, and the death of a 14-year-old boy who was hit by a tear gas grenade during the 'Gezi Park' protests in 2013;
- C. whereas on 19 August 2019, the Turkish authorities removed the elected mayors of the city of Diyarbakır, Adnan Selçuk Mızraklı, of the city of Mardin, Ahmet Türk, and of the city of Van, Bedia Özgökçe Ertan, from office and replaced them with government-appointed provincial governors, whereas the mayors are accused of spreading terrorist propaganda and financing terrorism, based on questionable evidence;
- D. whereas these latest measures are part of a broad and large scale repressive campaign by the Turkish government, impacting all people in Turkey, in particular opposition parties and opposition members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly,

media workers and journalists, officials in the Turkish military, police and security forces, as well officials working in the judiciary and in the state administration;

- E. whereas many of the measures taken are disproportionate, violate Turkish domestic legislation and are in breach of the commitments of a member of the Council of Europe and against the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; whereas over 150 000 people were taken into custody in the post-coup crackdown and 78 000 have been arrested on the basis of terrorism charges, while more than 50 000 people remain in jail, in most cases without conclusive evidence;
 - F. whereas the negotiating framework for the accession negotiations with Turkey, paragraph 5, stipulates that the Commission, in the case of a serious and persistent breach of the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, can recommend the suspension of negotiations; whereas the Council shall decide by qualified majority on such a recommendation;
1. reiterates its profound concern at the on-going deterioration in fundamental freedoms and the rule of law in Turkey, and condemns the use of arbitrary detention, judicial and administrative harassment, travel bans along with other means to persecute thousands Turkish citizens, including politicians and elected officials, human rights defenders, civil servants, members of independent civil society organisations, academics and countless ordinary citizens;
 2. expresses serious concern over the arrests and continued detentions of elected officials, political activists and human rights defenders and the deteriorating scope for democratic pluralism, freedom of expression and the freedom of the press and media in Turkey; notes that since the introduction of the state of emergency more than 152 000 civil servants have been dismissed;
 3. calls on the Turkish government to ensure that all individuals have the right to due process and to have their cases reviewed by an independent judicial court in accordance with international standards that can ensure redress, including compensation for the material and moral damage caused; calls on Turkey to ensure the operational, structural and financial independence of the National Human Rights and Equality Institution and of the Ombudsman Institution in order to guarantee their capacity to provide genuine review and redress opportunities and to abide by rulings by the European Court of Human Rights;
 4. calls on the Commission to use the funds currently allocated under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA II and the future IPA III) to support, through a dedicated envelope directly managed by the EU, Turkey's civil society, human rights defenders and journalists and to increase opportunities for people-to-people contacts, academic dialogue, access for Turkish students to European universities, and media platforms for journalists with the objective of protecting and promoting democratic values and principles, human rights and the rule of law;

5. calls on the Turkish authorities to release detained politicians, journalists and take urgent and fundamental measures to strengthen and restore democracy and the freedom of press and expression in the country;
6. expresses concern at the excessively lengthy pre-trial detention and judicial proceedings, the fact that in several cases no indictment has been issued yet, and the harshness of detention conditions; also expresses concern at the widespread practice of cancelling the passports of the relatives of detainees and suspects, and stresses the need for due process;
7. urges Turkey to make its anti-terrorism legislation compliant with international human rights standards;
8. expresses serious concern over the monitoring of social media platforms and the closedown of social media accounts by Turkey's authorities, sees in this a further restriction of the freedom of expression and a tool to repress civil society;
9. calls on the EU Delegation in Ankara to provide increased support and, where necessary and possible public backing to Human Rights Defenders, notably by monitoring and observing trials, requesting permission for prison visits and issuing statements addressing the Turkish authorities at all levels;
10. 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, and asks for this report to be translated into Turkish.