

Turkish Governments Decision Regarding the Dismissal of Elected Mayors of Diyarbakir, Mardin and Van

Press Release – August 22, 2019

We express our grave concern about the decision of the Turkish Government to suspend the elected mayors of three cities in the south-east of the country, namely Diyarbakir, Mardin and Van, and to replace them with governors.

These mayors were elected as a result of the free and fair expression of the will of the Turkish people during the local elections held on 31 March 2019, which were observed by relevant international organizations.

The replacement of Selçuk Mızraklı, Bedia Özgökçe Ertan and Ahmet Türk by state governors is of serious concern as it puts the respect of the democratic outcomes of the 31 March elections into question

The Turkish Government under the authoritarian rule of President Erdogan is pursuing its illiberal policies against its political opponents. With the aim to drive a wedge between the ranks of democratic powers in Turkey and in retribution to his defeat in the last local elections (March 2019) he is, for now, deliberately targeting HDP (Peoples` Democratic Party) Politicians.

Furthermore, we witnessed with sorrow the disproportional response of the Police to quash the protests in Diyarbakir, Mardin and Van, assembled in solidarity with their elected mayors.

Also, distressing statements of Government-Proxies, threatening the democratic objections of the people, HDP or other political parties are unacceptable.

Dismissals and detentions of local politicians and appointment of trustees deprive voters of political representation at local level, and seriously risk damaging local democracy.



We urge the Turkish Government to annul its decision and to restore the mandates of the elected Mayors Selçuk Mızraklı (Diyarbakir), Bedia Özgökçe Ertan (Van) and Ahmet Türk (Mardin).

Moreover, we urge the European Union and the Council of Europe to take further bold and determinant steps to hinder President Erdogan and the Turkish Government to undermine the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Constitution of Turkey and Turkey's international commitments.

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