

STATEMENT

Paris, July 1, 2021

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION UNDERLINES DIRE HUMAN RIGHTS
SITUATION IN TURKEY AND EXPRESSES SERIOUS CONCERN FOR THE
INDEPENDENCE OF LAWYERS, PROSECUTORS AND JUDGES**

UIA-IROL fully supports the European Parliament resolution of 19 May 2021 on the 2019-2020 Commission Reports on Turkey (2019/2176(INI))¹ (“the Resolution”) and its conclusions.

We note the statement that the European Parliament “*is deeply concerned by the serious backsliding on fundamental freedoms revealing the dire human rights situation in Turkey and the continued erosion of democracy and the rule of law*”².

We further note the following concerns of the Parliament:

- *“the erosion of the rule of law and the systemic lack of independence of the judiciary continue to be two of the most pressing and worrying issues; condemns the increased surveillance by the executive and the political pressure affecting the work of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and bar associations”*³;
- *“the situation of lawyers in Turkey, as over the last few years hundreds have been (and continue to be) harassed, arrested, prosecuted and convicted in relation to their professional activities and for representing their clients; shares the concerns highlighted in the opinion of the Venice Commission adopted in October 2020 on the July 2020 amendments to the Law on Lawyers of 1969, notably on the creation of multiple bar associations in the same city; stresses that this will lead to further politicisation of the legal profession, resulting in incompatibility with the impartiality requirement of the legal profession and endangering the independence of lawyers; is of the view that this legal reform may be a further blow to the functioning of the judiciary and an attempt to disempower existing bar associations and eradicate the remaining critical voices”*⁴;
- *“(…) in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, a legislative package provided for the conditional early release of up to 90 000 prisoners excluding, however, in a discriminatory manner, those held in pre-trial detention for alleged terrorism-related offences, including lawyers, journalists, politicians and human rights defenders, as they are not eligible for early release under these measures”*⁵.

¹ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0243_EN.pdf

² Resolution, § 10

³ Id., § 17

⁴ Id., § 19

⁵ Id., § 39

With the European Parliament, we urge the Turkish authorities to respect the independence of lawyers and judges and allow them to conduct their work freely in line with international human rights standards. We call for the immediate and unconditional release of all lawyers and judges who are detained solely for exercising the legal and judicial professions⁶.

More about the UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the International Association of Lawyers (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

For more information go to: www.uianet.org - uiacentre@uianet.org
Press contact: Marie-Pierre LIENARD, *Communication Officer* mplienard@uianet.org

⁶ See Resolution, § 19