

CONFERENCE AND LUNCH DISCUSSION

TURKEY'S DEEPENING DETERIORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS: FROM EMERGENCY TO A PERPETUAL CRACKDOWN

27 January 2020, 12:45-14:30

Press Club, Rue Froissart 95, 1000 Bruxelles

Routine extensions of the state of emergency in Turkey as well as the recently approved counterterrorism legislation have led to profound human rights violations against hundreds of thousands of people. These stems from arbitrary deprivation of the right to work and to freedom of movement, to torture and other ill-treatment, arbitrary detentions and infringements of the rights to freedom of association and expression, leading to considerable limitations of the civic space.

To this date, Turkey remains the world leader in jailing journalists. At the time of writing, an estimated 180 journalists and media workers are in pretrial detention or serving sentences for terrorism offenses without any compelling evidence of criminal activity. Hundreds more are on trial including civil servants, teachers, and politicians, as well as police officers and military personnel. Reports from civil society sources and the OHCHR also indicate continued allegations of torture, ill-treatment, and cruel and inhuman or degrading treatment in police custody and prison as well as the lack of any meaningful investigation. These issues were raised by the UN OHCHR¹ on several occasions as well as by the EU's Spokesperson², but without any concrete action.

Overall, the human rights cost of the state of emergency has been massive and the consequences of the government crackdown in the aftermath of the attempted coup of 2016 continue to be greatly felt today, and watched silently by the international community. One day prior to the **UN Universal Periodic Review on Turkey**, this timely event will assess the current human rights situation in the country and propose strategic and evidence-based recommendations to different stakeholders. As an action plan, this set of policies will be further presented to the **President of the UN Human Rights Council, Ms. Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, and the Chair of European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights, Ms. Maria Arena.**

¹ https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/2018-03-19_Second_OHCHR_Turkey_Report.pdf

² https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/external-investment-plan/64642/statement-spokesperson-human-rights-turkey_en