

Legal Report Reveals Systematic Human Rights Violations by Turkish Government

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- *Call for legal action at international level from European Court of Human Rights*

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, September 28, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Legal Report Reveals Systematic Human Rights Violations by Turkish Government

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London, 28 September, 2015: Since December 2013, the Turkish government has perpetrated systematic human rights violations that justify legal action at international level, most likely before the European Court of Human Rights, a report published today has found.

Written by former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales the Rt Hon The Lord Woolf CH, University College London Emeritus Professor of Public Law and the Director of the Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law Sir Jeffrey Jowell KCMG QC, former Solicitor-General for England and Wales the Rt Hon Sir Edward Garnier QC MP, and human rights and media law barrister Sarah Palin, the report identifies supporters of the Gülen movement and the media, as the principal targets of the AKP government's abuses.

The report's findings come as the Erdoğan administration faces heightened international scrutiny over its crackdown on freedom of the press in Turkey. The recent arrest of two Vice News journalists and dawn raid on the Koza Ipek group, which together in the past month have elicited renewed public outcry against the AKP-led government's treatment of the media, are reminiscent of a number of events detailed in the report. The clearest parallel can be drawn with the December 2014 arrests of 15 purportedly Gülen-affiliated journalists, including Samanyolu Media Group chief executive Hidayet Karaça, whose court-ordered release the Istanbul chief public prosecutor's office still refuses to carry out.

Commenting on the findings of the report, the authors said: "We have analysed the actions taken by the Turkish government and its agents since December 2013 and have unanimously concluded that there has been a distinct reversal in the reform process that had been taking place since Turkey began accession talks with the European Union in 2005. We regard this as a serious setback for Turkish democracy and its respect for human rights, in particular for the freedom of speech and the rule of law."

The report identifies three main ways in which the government's subsequent actions against supporters of the Gülen movement have violated the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), as well as other human rights treaties to which the Turkish Republic is party:

- i) By taking unprecedented steps to exert executive authority over Turkey's judiciary, police and prosecuting authorities are subsequently detaining outspoken media figures and police officers involved in the anticorruption operation in contravention of their rights to liberty, security, and a fair trial
- ii) By suppressing freedom of expression, particularly in the media through the filing of criminal

prosecutions against and exertion of economic and political pressure on journalists and publications, but also through interference with social media

iii) By purging from public office, directing hate speech against, and interfering with the property rights of individuals and companies associated with the Gülen movement

The authors added: "From the perspective of international human rights law, we consider that the Turkish government has perpetrated significant human rights violations against supporters of the Gülen movement that would justify legal action before the European Court of Human Rights, in the absence of suitable remedies in Turkey."

For the full report, visit One Brick Court Chambers website.

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Media

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Notes to Editors

About the Gülen movement:

The Gülen movement is a civil society network of individuals and religious, humanitarian, and educational institutions that subscribe to Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen's advocacy of interfaith dialogue, community service, and universal education.

About the report:

The report, titled "A report on the rule of law and respect for human rights in Turkey since December 2013", was written by an independent, self-governing group of authors following a request by solicitors to the Journalists and Writers' Foundation to conduct an independent desk-based inquiry into the actions of the Turkish government, its institutions and officials, against supporters of the Gülen movement. The subject material of this review included written statements provided by witnesses and victims, as well as Turkish legislation, court judgements, and summaries of witness testimonies.

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