

European Lawmakers and Rights Groups Endorse Strasbourg Rally Calling for Action on Turkey Decisions

More than 5,000 people gathered in Strasbourg, urging the Council of Europe to ensure Turkey enforces binding ECtHR judgments.

STRASBOURG, FRANCE, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More than 5,000 activists and human rights advocates gathered in Strasbourg for the fifth annual Justice Gathering, calling on the Council of Europe to take stronger action against human rights violations in Turkey.

The event was organized by the Peaceful Actions Platform with the support of 17 civil society organizations. European politicians, journalists, academics, artists and activists also supported the gathering.

Participants met near the Council of Europe and marched with banners, music and slogans. Their main demand was the implementation of judgments issued by the European Court of Human Rights. These rulings are legally binding on Turkey because it is a member of the Council of Europe.



PeacefulAction



PeacefulAction

The demonstration highlighted the cases of Osman Kavala, Selahattin Demirtaş and Yüksel Yalçınkaya. Protesters also drew attention to political prosecutions, arbitrary detention, pressure on journalists and the treatment of people accused of links to the Gülen movement.

Organizers used the slogan “One World, One Justice.” Eleven participants wearing masks of famous football players, including Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Kylian Mbappé, joined the march. Batman and Superman characters also appeared as symbols of international solidarity.

After the march, representatives submitted a letter to Council of Europe Secretary General Alain Berset and other senior officials.



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The letter said human rights violations in Turkey were not only a domestic problem but also a serious test for Europe’s human rights system. It called on the Council of Europe to use its legal and political mechanisms to ensure that Turkey implements ECtHR judgments.

The event continued with music and theater performances. One performance remembered families who died while crossing the Aegean Sea or the Meriç River after fleeing Turkey.

Cyclists from several European countries also joined the gathering through the “Cycling for Justice” campaign.

European politicians sent messages of support. Dutch member of the European Parliament Raquel García Hermida-van der Walle said the protesters were defending democracy, freedom and the rule of law.

French lawmaker Sandra Regol urged participants not to give up their struggle. She said the gathering supported women, journalists, elected mayors and people unjustly imprisoned.

British lawmaker James MacCleary called on the Council of Europe to act. He said Turkey must respect European court judgments and release political prisoners. He also referred to the imprisonment of İstanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu and other opposition figures.

Academic Sophia Pandya spoke about people she had interviewed after they fled Turkey. She said victims had described imprisonment, mistreatment and family separation. She called for the release of mothers, children and political prisoners.

The gathering also focused on Turkey’s crackdown following the failed coup attempt in July 2016. More than 130,000 public servants were removed from their positions during the state of emergency.

Many former public employees were prevented from returning to public service and faced difficulties finding work in the private sector.

According to figures cited at the gathering, more than 126,000 people have been convicted over alleged links to the Gülen movement since 2016, while thousands remain in prison or under investigation. The movement denies involvement in the coup attempt or terrorist activity.

Organizers said the rule-of-law crisis affects many different groups, including journalists, politicians, teachers, students, civil society leaders and ordinary citizens.

The protest ended with a clear message: European court judgments must not remain only on paper. The Council of Europe must ensure that Turkey respects and implements them.

Mustafa Medya

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