

06 July, 2017

## **Our colleague human rights defenders should be released immediately!**

Human Rights Defenders Nalan Erkem, İlknur Üstün, İdil Eser, Özlem Dalkıran, Günal Kurşun, Veli Acu, Şeyhmuz Özbekli, Nejat Taştan, Ali Gharavi and Peter Steudtner must be released immediately!

In a planning meeting from 7-9 April 2017 in Antalya, Human Rights Joint Platform founders and members, Human Rights Association, Human Rights Agenda Association, Amnesty International Turkey, and Citizens' Assembly, took a joint decision to organise a series of seminars for human rights defenders.

Yesterday (July 5) morning, 8 human rights defenders and 2 experts were detained at a seminar organised in line with the above-mentioned decision. Seminar organised from 2-7 July on Istanbul Buyukada Island was about techniques and methodologies for human rights defenders to better continue their work in defending human rights in times of states of emergency.

These human rights defenders who are our colleagues were first detained in the police detention centre on the Island where the seminar was taking place. Detention took place with an order of restriction by a public prosecutor that denied information from lawyers, families and colleagues about the detention and conditions of it. We learned about their detention at 21h14, hours after detention took place. Again due to this order of information restriction, we do not know about the conditions and states of our human rights defender colleagues, whether or not they are still on the Buyukada Island, whether or not they are transferred to other detention centres in the mainland Istanbul.

The fact that families of the detained human rights defenders were not informed about their detention, that no information is made available due to order of restriction by the prosecutor, current conditions of this detention seem to go beyond standard state of emergency rules and regulations, and may amount to incommunicado detention.

We are witnesses to all the positive efforts for protection of human rights and freedoms by our colleagues over the years. As we stressed time and again, defending human rights is a fundamental human right.

The families, relatives, and lawyers should immediately be well-informed on whereabouts, the conditions of and the accusations against the human rights defenders who were arbitrarily detained yesterday. According to the universal norms, even the state of emergency rule is based on rule of law and cannot be implemented arbitrarily. Therefore their rights to life, personal liberty and security should be respected in line with the prohibition of torture and ill-treatment.

Our colleague human rights defenders should be released immediately!

Human Rights Association, Human Rights Agenda Association, Womens' Coalition, Kaos GL Association, Pink Life LGBTT Solidarity Association, Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, Amnesty International Turkey, Citizenship Association, Memory Centre, Association for Monitoring Equal Rights, Rights Initiative

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