

6 July 2017

Turkey: Detention of eight human rights defenders

On 5 July 2017, eight human rights defenders, along with two consultants, were detained on Buyukada island, off the coast of Istanbul in Turkey. **Nalan Erkem, Seyhmuz Ozbekli, Ozlem Dalkiran, Idil Eser, Veli Acu, Gunal Kursun, Ilknur Ustun** and **Nejat Tastan** and were all arrested as they attended a workshop. Two consultants, Ali Gharawi and Peter Steudtner, were also detained. It is believed that Ali Gharawi and Peter Steudtner are being held in Buyukada Police Station. The whereabouts of the eight human rights defenders are currently unknown.

Nalan Erkem, Seyhmuz Ozbekli and Ozlem Dalkiran all work for the **Helsinki Citizen's Assembly**, an organisation promoting peace, democracy and civil society throughout Europe. Idil Eser is the director of **Amnesty International Turkey**. Veli Acu and Gunal Kursun work for the **Human Rights Agenda Association**, monitoring human rights violations throughout the country. Ilknur Ustun is a member of the **Women's Coalition**, which focuses on gender equality and enhanced female participation in public life. Nejat Tastan is coordinator at the **Association for Monitoring Equal Rights**, an NGO promoting equality and carrying out independent election observation. Ali Gharawi and Peter Steudtner are consultants who were collaborating with the Dutch Development Agency, **HIVOS**, to support human rights defenders and development organisations.

On the morning of 5 July 2017, the Ascot hotel on the island of Buyukada, a venue where a workshop organised by the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly for Turkish human rights defenders was being held was raided by Turkish police. All of the participants were arrested and subsequently moved to detention centres. It is believed that the two consultants, Ali Gharawi and Peter Steudtner, continue to be held incommunicado on the island of Buyukada. Lawyers have thus far been denied access to the two men. The whereabouts of the eight human rights defenders are currently unconfirmed, although it is believed that they have been moved from Buyukada to Istanbul.

Front Line Defenders is extremely concerned by the arrests of the above mentioned eight human rights defenders and two consultants as it believed that they have been detained in relation to their work in the defence of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Turkey to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Nalan Erkem, Seyhmuz Ozbekli, Ozlem Dalkiran, Idil Eser, Veli Acu, Gunal Kursun, Ilknur Ustun, Nejat Tastan, Ali Gharawi and Peter Steudtner as Front Line Defenders believes that they are being held solely as a result of their legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Nalan Erkem, Seyhmuz Ozbekli, Ozlem Dalkiran, Idil Eser, Veli Acu, Gunal Kursun, Ilknur Ustun, Nejat Tastan, Ali Gharawi and Peter Steudtner ;
3. Ensure that the treatment of Nalan Erkem, Seyhmuz Ozbekli, Ozlem Dalkiran, Idil Eser, Veli Acu, Gunal Kursun, Ilknur Ustun, Nejat Tastan, Ali Gharawi and Peter Steudtner,

while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the 'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

4. Immediately inform the family and lawyers of Nalan Erkem, Seyhmuoz Ozbekli, Ozlem Dalkiran, Idil Eser, Veli Acu, Gunal Kursun, Ilknur Ustun, Nejat Tastan of the place of their detention, and allow them immediate and unfettered access to them, and permit the lawyers of Ali Gharawi and Peter Steudtner immediate and unfettered access to them.

5. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Turkey and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.