

18 June 2020

Turkey: Home of human rights lawyer Eren Keskin broken into

On 16 June 2020, the home of human rights defender and lawyer **Eren Keskin** was broken into by unknown individuals. Her belongings were disturbed, but nothing was taken from the house, indicating that the break-in was an attempt to threaten and intimidate the human rights defender.

[Eren Keskin](#) is a human rights defender, lawyer, and the Co-Chair of İnsan Hakları Derneği (*İHD-Human Rights Association*) in Turkey. She is also the founder of Gözaltında Cinsel Taciz ve Tecavüze Karşı Hukuki Yardım Bürosu (*Legal Aid Bureau against Sexual Harassment and Rape in Custody*). She has been arrested, imprisoned and the object of numerous lawsuits for her legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights. Eren Keskin was the Chief Editor of the *Ozgur Gundem* newspaper between 2013-2016, which was closed by a Statutory Decree after the 2016 coup attempt. She has been on trial on 143 cases and she has been given prison sentences totalling 17 years and 2 months prison in various lawsuits which are pending before the Court of Cassation. Eren Keskin has been awarded many human rights awards both in Turkey and abroad and was the finalist for the Martin Ennals Award in 2019.

On 16 June 2020, unknown individuals broke into Eren Keskin's home. The defender has not been living in the house since the recent passing of her mother. The incident was made to look like a burglary, with her belongings thrown around the house, but nothing was stolen. The incident was reported to the local police, who then conducted an investigation at the defender's house. The police are analysing CCTV footage from the neighbourhood in an effort to identify the perpetrators.

It would appear that the break-in was an attempt to intimidate and threaten Eren Keskin, given that it happened four days after she appeared before the Istanbul Public Prosecutor's Office on 12 June. On that day, she gave her deposition for a new investigation opened against her, regarding some of her social media posts from 2015, for which she could be charged with 'propagandising for a terrorist organization'.

For decades, Eren Keskin has been subject to threats and harassment by state and non-state actors as a result of her human rights work. The opening of the most recent investigation is yet another incident of judicial harassment against her.

Front Line Defenders believes that the recent break-in to Eren Keskin's home is a renewed attempt to silence the defender and force her to cease her human rights work. It is deeply concerned by the increasingly intolerant and stigmatic discourse towards human rights defenders by senior state officials. It is further concerned by, the ongoing arrests and judicial harassment human rights defenders are subjected to for their work. Front Line Defenders believes that this intolerance and discourse espoused by some state officials serves to create an environment around human rights defenders in which attacks, threats and harassment are tolerated and perpetrators operate with relative impunity.

Front Line Defenders urges the Turkish authorities to:

1. Ensure that the investigation into the break-in at Eren Keskin's home is thorough and impartial, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;

2. Cease all legal harassment against Eren Keskin and other human rights defenders, as it is believed to be in direct reprisal for their peaceful and legitimate human rights work;
3. Cease the public condemnation and smearing of human rights defenders and their work in Turkey;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Turkey are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals, and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.