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### **The Police Raid on HDP Istanbul Headquarters**

The Istanbul headquarters of HDP, the third largest party in the parliament representing the will of more than five million voters, was ravaged and vandalized by Turkish Police Special Operations teams at 3.00 a.m. on 11 August. Backed by a helicopter and armored vehicles, the police broke in the building like gangs; they stayed there for five hours and did not let any HDP executives or lawyers in. What they left behind were broken windows and tables, pillaged aid packages to Şırnak and Nusaybin, smashed flowers, computers and copiers, ripped books, torn posters and graffiti, and damaged walls and infrastructure. Our co-chairs immediately asked for an official explanation from the government, but to no avail.

The raid took place after President Erdoğan had openly and repeatedly put the HDP on the target. It is telling that the raid came only a couple of hours after Erdoğan had announced a temporary break in the nightly rounds of three-week “democracy watches,” which have been instrumentalized to form and consolidate a Turkist nationalist coalition rather than a democracy bloc. Erdoğan had previously excluded the HDP from the leaders’ summit as well as the Yenikapi meeting in Istanbul. In a similar vein, the AKP government chose not to include the HDP in the parliamentary committee to work on a package of constitutional changes. Also, Erdoğan underlined the delay in processing the cases against HDP deputies due to the coup attempt and called for speeding up the process.

Having said that it was a God’s gift to him, Erdoğan has been using the failed coup attempt as an opportunity to silence all dissenting voices in the country. The scope of his repressive campaign is definitely not limited to pacifying the coup plotters. He is gradually but surely expanding the scope of repression and targeting all democratic forces in the country. The vandalizing of HDP’s Istanbul headquarters should be interpreted in this context and viewed as the clear sign of an impending wave of even more violent aggression against the Kurds and all other democratic forces in the country.

We view the raid as a deliberate act of intimidation and criminalization to marginalize the HDP and its democratic program, especially its decisive position to find a peaceful solution for the Kurdish issue. Despite all counter propaganda, HDP remains to be a genuine democratic alternative committed to address the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of Turkey to live in a democratic and peaceful country.

In these extremely precarious times for democratic life in Turkey, we invite the international community to remain vigilant, show solidarity, and make it clear that the HDP is not alone in the arduous struggle for democracy, justice, and peace.

Yours Sincerely,



**Hişyar ÖZSOY**  
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