



20 April 2017

Ms Burcu Çelik, HDP Deputy for Muş, is jailed

President Erdoğan and the AKP government have launched a new wave of repression against our party immediately after the controversial referendum on 16 April 2017, which, according to the OSCE/ODIHR's observation mission, did not meet the standards of the CoE. Two days after the referendum, on 18 April 2017, the countrywide state of emergency rule was extended for a third time, which will be in effect until July 20. The next day, on 19 April 2017, Ms Burcu Celik, HDP deputy for Muş, was arrested and sent to prison, making her the 14th jailed deputy of HDP.

Ms. Celik was detained in Varto, a district of her constituency Muş, while she was heading back to the city centre where she was following voting irregularities and frauds. In Ms. Celik's hearing on 18 April 2017, the court ordered to "bring her by force" to the hearing scheduled for 18 May 2017. Although the prosecutor demanded the release of Ms Celik and revocation of the "bring by force" order, the court decided to arrest her the next day with the charges of "inciting people to hatred and enmity and making terrorist propaganda" due to a speech she had delivered after the general elections in 2015.

Ms Çelik did reveal many referendum irregularities and frauds in Muş, which clearly disturbed the government, local officials, and, in particular, the governor of Muş.

Ms Çelik has been a member of the Parliamentary Human Rights Inquiry Committee, and its sub-committee for the rights of convicts and detainees. As a deputy she has been able to investigate rights violations in prisons due to her membership to the sub-committee. Two of the three HDP deputies who are members of the Human Rights Inquiry Committee, namely Ayhan Bilgen and Burcu Çelik, are currently in jail, leaving only one member of the committee free at a most critical time with respect to human rights violations in the country. Ms Celik was also a member and co-spokesperson for HDP's eight-person committee to monitor prison conditions. Ms Gülser Yıldırım and Ms Besime Konca, two HDP deputies who were members of this committee, have already been jailed.

These synchronized irregularities in the referendum, the extension of emergency rule, and on-going detention of deputies and dissidents are an urgent call to all international entities, first and foremost to the EU, CoE, ECHR, and the PACE authorities. The democratic international public and institutions should not turn a blind eye on this sheer unlawfulness against the HDP and peoples of Turkey, go beyond releasing statements of concern, and take urgent and concrete action.

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