



23.10.2017

Subject: The fourth hearing of the legal case against Ms Gultan Kisanak (co-mayor of Diyarbakir) and Ms Sebahat Tuncel (co-chair of Democratic Regions Party) will be held on **November 3, 2017 in Malatya.**

The crackdown against democratic opposition in Turkey, and against Kurdish politicians in particular, continues relentlessly. All fundamental elements of parliamentary and local democracy have been destroyed under conditions of emergency rule since the abortive coup on July 15, 2017. Besides arresting the co-chairs and MPs of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the AKP government has also appointed state commissioners to 94 municipalities to replace elected Kurdish mayors who were unlawfully dismissed and/or jailed. The government has also suspended activities of municipal councils whose members were elected in 2014. About six million local people have been affected by this onslaught on local democracy in Kurdish provinces.

Ms Gultan Kisanak, co-mayor of Diyarbakir, and Ms Sebahat Tuncel, co-chair of Democratic Regions Party (DBP), both former MPs, have been in prison since November 2016. The indictments filed against them could not provide any credible evidence pertaining to any criminal activity, but only has listed peaceful protests they had attended and exercised their freedom of speech on issues such as decentralization, peace, and gender equality in Turkey. Ms Kisanak and Ms Tuncel have not been released or acquitted after four hearings. The next hearing will be held on **November 3, 2017 at the Malatya Court House.**
(<https://goo.gl/maps/fW6954vFTaq>)

Observation missions by foreign delegations may make a crucial impact on Turkish courts in terms of reminding the panel of judges of their duty to apply the rule of law rather than using these extremely politicized cases against Kurdish politicians to prove their loyalty to the increasingly nationalist Turkish government. Attendance of representatives from foreign parliaments, municipalities, city councils, NGOs, and women's organizations to the hearings will also show the strength of international solidarity in the struggle for democracy, peace, and equality in Turkey.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, if you have any questions or need for assistance for arrangements to observe the hearing.

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