

**POSITION PAPER:  
Turkish Family Drowned in Aegean Sea Escaping from Erdogan's  
Regime**

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Victims of Erdogan's regime are increasing everyday as there has not been an effective mechanism preventing him. On November 21, 2017, Greek media reported that Greek authorities have found bodies of five, including three children, short time ago on the Greek Island of Lesbos. Identities of the bodies were revealed through the ID cards found on them which was handed out to the Turkish police to check the records. On the other hand, relatives of the Maden family have not heard from them for some time. Reportedly, the bodies were the Maden family who has been trying to flee from Erdogan's Turkey. Both the father, Huseyin Maden, and mother, Nur Maden, were allegedly linked to the Gulen Movement that has been blamed for everything going wrong in Turkey just like a scapegoat. According to the gathered information, both were sacked from their jobs as a result of the government's actions targeting everyone in connection with the Gulen Movement. Moreover, there were detention warrants on their names accusing them of being a terrorist, therefore, it was speculated that the family was trying to escape from Erdogan's autocratic regime in the search for freedom. The Greek police presumes that the family was a part of a larger refugee group escaping from the country and thus questioning recently arrived refugees. The investigations are still on-going to lighten the case.<sup>1</sup>

Every oppressive regime in the world creates similar types of victims. Just like Syrian boy named Alan Kurdi (first reported as Aylan Kurdi) who was a three-year old Kurdish boy fleeing from Syrian regime, whose body was found in the coast of Turkey; Nadire, Bahar and Feridun, two daughters and a son of the Maden family, were innocent children of conflict entitled to every right in the Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as all the other human rights conventions. The President Erdogan voiced the situation of Alan Kurdi and said "What has drowned in the Mediterranean is not only the refugees. Humanity has drowned in the Mediterranean Sea," and called for immediate international action about the refugee crisis.<sup>2</sup> However, he has been ignoring this recent case of the Maden family and been silent about them who were trying to escape from his own regime. Similar cases have happened especially in the last year. In struggle for freedom, many people have been trying to escape from their countries leaving everything behind. Whereas some tries legal avenues, it is inevitable that some tries illegal means because the government cancelled their passports.

The Turkish government has started a witch hunt in recent years targeting the Gulen Movement. Especially after the so-called attempted coup in July 15, 2016, the actions of the governments were harshened blaming the faith-based movement to be behind the coup. Just after July 15, the decree laws listed more than 150,000 people including judges, military personnel, police officers, teachers as well as academicians to be dismissed from their jobs, and most were either arrested or imprisoned. Measures are not only limited to those but also abduction, asset freezing as well as passport cancellation took place in the country. The Movement has been strongly denying any involvement with the coup calling for an international investigation regarding the issue.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see: Kokkinidis, Tasos. "Bodies of Family Fleeing Persecution Found on Lesbos, Turkish Media Says." *News from Greece*, 22 Nov. 2017, [greece.greekreporter.com/2017/11/22/bodies-of-family-fleeing-persecution-found-on-lesvos-turkish-media-says/](http://greece.greekreporter.com/2017/11/22/bodies-of-family-fleeing-persecution-found-on-lesvos-turkish-media-says/); "The tragic story of a Turkish family fleeing from persecution." *Kronos*, 21 Nov. 2017, [www.kronos.news/tr/the-tragic-story-of-a-turkish-family-fleeing-from-persecution/](http://www.kronos.news/tr/the-tragic-story-of-a-turkish-family-fleeing-from-persecution/); "Bodies washed ashore on Lesbos may be Turkish family fleeing persecution, authorities told." *The Greek Observer*, 23 Nov. 2017, [thegreekobserver.com/greece/article/27625/bodies-washed-ashore-lesvos-may-turkish-family-fleeing-persecution-authorities-told/](http://thegreekobserver.com/greece/article/27625/bodies-washed-ashore-lesvos-may-turkish-family-fleeing-persecution-authorities-told/).

<sup>2</sup> Tharoor, Ishaan. "Death of drowned Syrian toddler Aylan Kurdi jolts world leaders." *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 3 Sept. 2015, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/09/03/image-of-drowned-syrian-toddler-aylan-kurdi-jolts-world-leaders/?utm\\_term=.f4eef506911a](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/09/03/image-of-drowned-syrian-toddler-aylan-kurdi-jolts-world-leaders/?utm_term=.f4eef506911a).

The Turkish government has been violating human rights and fundamental freedoms for a long time now increasing the number of victims each day. Core rights enshrined both in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights such as the right to life, freedom from torture, right to liberty and security, right to a fair trial as well as freedom of expression and religion were violated by the government on a large scale. Unfortunately, no mechanism to alleviate the situation in the country has been effective enough so far.

We, as the Advocates of Silenced Turkey, are calling all the international and non-governmental human rights organizations to raise awareness about the drowned Maden family and also to take immediate action as regards the problems in Turkey to prevent other families and children from suffering as such.

## ADVOCATES OF SILENCED TURKEY

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To address all human rights violations in Turkey regarding civil, political, economic, social and cultural as contained in the basic human rights documents.



To prevent genocide, crime against humanity, arbitrary detention, torture and ill treatment, discrimination and to defend right to life, rule of law, right to privacy, freedom of expression, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of associations.



To utilize all human rights advocacy tools, mechanisms, and systems that can possibly be used to protect and promote the human rights of those whose voices are being silenced in Turkey and beyond.



To hold accountable the perpetrators of Human Rights in Turkey and beyond together with the opportunity for victims to obtain justice and reparation, in order to do so, it uses the power of the law to fight the impunity of perpetrators, accomplices and instigators of crimes, defends the interests of victims before national and international courts and brings cases before the appropriate international human rights bodies, in close collaboration with its local partners and the victims and lobbies to get authorities to take firm action against violations.