



Re: Urging governments and international organizations to take preemptive steps to ensure safety of people perceived as Hizmet Movement sympathizers after abduction of six Turkish nationals in Kosovo by the long arm of President Erdogan

Dear ,

On March 29, 2018, Mr. Mustafa Erdem, Mr. Yusuf Karabina, Mr. Kahraman Demirez, Mr. Cihan Özkan, Mr. Hasan Hüseyin Günakan, employees of Turkish Educational Institutions in Kosovo and Prof. Osman Karakaya were **arbitrarily detained in Kosovo and extradited back to Turkey by Turkish intelligence officers**. All six Turkish nationals had legal residence in the country and were detained by Kosovo police on demands of the Turkish regime for being affiliated with the Hizmet Movement<sup>1</sup>.

Hashim Thaci, President of Kosovo, told the press that he was **disappointed because their relevant institutions have failed to defend principles related to human rights of foreign citizens** who live and work in their Kosovo<sup>2</sup>. Kosovo Prime Minister Mr. Ramush Haradinaj informed the public that he was **not informed about this operation and that he would act according to his legal and constitutional competencies**<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, Kosovo's foreign ministry strongly denounced the action, "the **arrest and deportation of the Turkish citizens with a regular residence permit ... is ... in direct contradiction to international norms**"<sup>4</sup>. Kosovo Prime Minister sacked the Interior Minister Mr. Flamur Sefaj and Intelligence Chief Mr. Driton Gashio for **their collaboration with a foreign power and their failure to inform their superiors on such a controversial operation**<sup>5</sup>.

Turkish President Mr. Tayyip Erdogan has been vocal about Turkish government's involvement in the operation. He told a group of provincial heads of his party that the Turkish National Intelligence Agency (MIT) "in collaboration with the Kosovo Intelligence took over six highest ranking representatives of FETO in Balkans, brought them to Turkey and handed over to the police"<sup>6</sup>. At a recent meeting with ruling AKP provincial chairpersons in Ankara, President Erdogan also **expressed his satisfaction with the operation to abduct six Turkish nations linked to the Hizmet Movement in Kosovo and vowed to bring all people affiliated with the movement to Turkey with similar operations**<sup>7</sup>. President Erdogan also criticized Kosovo Prime Minister Haradinaj for dismissing the country's interior minister and intelligence chief. He also **openly threatened the Kosovo PM by saying "You will pay the price for this"**<sup>8</sup>.

President Erdogan is using **mafia-like methods** to govern the country. There are **many cases of organized crimes** in Turkey<sup>9</sup>. Nonetheless, President Erdogan has on numerous occasions shown that his **threats can be successful in smaller states**. Since the failed coup attempt in 2016, Turkish government successfully **abducted Hizmet sympathizers from Sudan, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Georgia, Myanmar and Malaysia**. Advocates of Silenced Turkey's have released a comprehensive report on the current and possible threats supports of the Gulen Movement face abroad<sup>10</sup>. Nonetheless, the US President Donald Trump's ex-national security adviser **Mike Flynn was alleged to accept the Turkish government's offer of 15 million dollars in exchange for delivering Mr. Fethullah Gulen to Turkey** while he was in office<sup>11</sup>.

**Turkey is not a safe country under Authoritarian Erdogan regime** for alleged and real affiliates of the Gulen Movement and his opponents. **Turkey was ranked 155 in Reporters Without Border's 2017 World Press Freedom Index** and 171 journalists still in jail in 2018 according to free journalist initiative. Several international organizations have **reported on torture and mistreatment in Turkish prisons** of the alleged members of the Gulen Movement including a most recent condemnatory report by **UN High Commissioner for Human Rights**<sup>12</sup>. Under such conditions, it is of utmost urgency that we express our concerns about these detentions and prospective extraditions of Turkish nationals to Turkey. In line with these concerns, only in the last 18 months, three separate United Kingdom courts, the German Federal Constitutional Court and a Czech court have dismissed extradition requests filed by Turkey.

People that are perceived as linked to the Hizmet Movement across the world are justifiably right to be afraid of their safety. **We kindly request from governments around the world and all relevant international organizations caring about human rights to promptly take all necessary preemptive steps to ensure safety of these people before its to late, including:**

- *Identify individuals in the country who are likely targets of the Turkish National Intelligence Agency and the Turkish government, and that is in danger of being threatened, abducted, tortured and/or killed or illegally extradited.*
- *Investigate evidence of the Turkish government's illegal activity, including potential perpetrators' actions, behaviors and abductions; extrajudicial assassinations of targets; and the torture or illegal removal of person(s) from the country.*
- *Urge the Turkish government to immediately dissolve the Office for Human Abduction and Executions.*
- *Support Human Rights Defenders in Turkey and abroad, and prevent arbitrary deprivation of life and extrajudicial killings.*
- *Turkish diplomats that have been working as spies, must be watched closely, and they must be prevented if they are in preparation of any harm.*
- *State departments should urgently call in Turkish ambassadors to attain information of whether they are working on similar operations.*

Sincerely,

- <sup>1</sup> <http://balkaneu.com/mit-sends-operatives-to-kosovo-to-transfer-6-feto-members-to-turkey/>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://stockholmcf.org/kosovo-president-thaci-slams-detention-of-6-turkish-citizens-over-links-to-gulen-movement>
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/kosovo-pm-haradinaj-says-he-was-not-informed-about-turkeys-feto-operation-in-pristina-129530>
- <sup>4</sup> <https://www.voanews.com/a/kosovo-arrests-6-turks-linked-to-erdogan-opponent/4322937.html>
- <sup>5</sup> <https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-security-kosovo/kosovo-pm-sacks-security-chief-interior-minister-over-turkish-arrests-idUKKBN1H60RS>
- <sup>6</sup> <http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogandan-mitin-kosovadaki-operasyonu-hakkinda-aciklama,593613;>  
<http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-43595392>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://www.turkishminute.com/2018/03/30/erdogan-praises-kosovo-operation-promises-more-abductions/>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://stockholmcf.org/turkeys-erdogan-threatens-kosovo-pm-haradinaj-you-will-pay-the-price-for-this/>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/turkey/2017-11-30/turkey-turning-mafia-state>
- <sup>10</sup> [http://silencedturkey.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/AST\\_Report\\_Threats\\_Gulen-Movement.pdf](http://silencedturkey.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/AST_Report_Threats_Gulen-Movement.pdf)
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/mueller-probes-flynn-s-role-in-alleged-plan-to-deliver-cleric-to-turkey-1510309982>
- <sup>12</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/2018-03-19\\_Second\\_OHCHR\\_Turkey\\_Report.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/TR/2018-03-19_Second_OHCHR_Turkey_Report.pdf)