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## **THE SO-CALLED COUP THAT SERVES AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR THE COMPLETE CONVERSION OF A COUNTRY'S ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM AS WELL AS A JUSTIFICATION FOR THE VICTIMIZATION OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS**

On July 15, 2016 Turkey witnessed an attempted but failed military coup against Erdoğan government. During this horrific uprising, hundreds of people were killed and thousands of others were injured. Right after the coup attempt, the Turkish government has taken a wave of oppressive actions against not only the alleged coup plotters but also those that are perceived as critics of the regime. With that, the country's political spectrum has been completely changed. Amid massive crackdown on media outlets and hundreds of thousands of the dissidents, President Erdoğan further consolidated his power with a controversial referendum in 2017 that changed the country from a parliamentary democracy into one-man rule. Being seen a setback from the rule of law, the new presidential system deepened concerns on human rights.

Marking a monumental turning point in Turkey's history, the uprising has not been thoroughly investigated. Questioning the government's narrative has caused many to imprisonment. The leaked details fueled the suspicions on the government's narrative thus diminished its credibility. The narrative along with the massive crackdown on the dissident groups and Erdoğan's consolidation of power faced heavy criticism from almost all quarters of the democratic world. In fact, a former representative of the European Parliament and well-known politician Andrew Duff defined it as "quick and relentless so-called coup". The present report of Advocates of Silenced Turkey (AST) provides an overview of controversies and dark points on the "so-called coup" along with the human right concerns during the ongoing post-coup crackdown on the Turkey's dissident groups.

Some of the highlights from the report are:

- **A coup with no plan of action:** Every coup has a certain plan of action, yet no official document has been presented so far for the July 15 coup attempt or the list of individuals involved with the Yurtta Sulh Council that has allegedly masterminded the coup.
- **A "blessing from God":** Right after the coup attempt, Erdoğan described the incident as a "blessing from God", implying that he had finally found the opportunity to carry out the purge on his dissidents.

- **Step by step towards a presidential regime:** Within less than a year, a referendum for constitutional change was held and the new Turkish-style presidential system was put into effect. Following this, Erdoğan became the first president of the new regime through early elections.
- **A coup notice from TSK to MIT:** Osman Karacan, a major in TSK (Turkish Armed Forces) went to the MIT (National Intelligence Organization) headquarters on July 15 at 2:20pm to give notice about the planned coup. Yet, no real precautions were taken to prevent or suppress the coup until 10.00pm.
- **Chief of MIT and Chief of Defense are still in office:** Chief of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) Hakan Fidan, Chief of Defense Hulusi Akar and 2nd Chief of Defense Yaşar Güler reportedly held a series of meetings following the notice at 2:20pm on the planned coup but did not notify President Erdoğan until 7:00pm, yet they kept their office.
- **The conflicting explanations from Erdoğan regarding time of coup:** When speaking to national and international media, Erdoğan stated contradicting times with regards to the time when he was informed of the planned coup.
- **The “controlled coup”:** Turkey's main opposition party (CHP) described what happened on the July 15 as "controlled coup".
- **Planes on standby for escape:** It is discovered that 4 different airplanes at 4 different locations were arranged for Erdoğan to be on standby that night, implying Erdoğan's possible knowledge of the planned coup attempt.
- **Secret meetings a day before the coup:** It is revealed that Akar, Chief of Defense, and Fidan, Chief of MIT (National Intelligence Organization), held a one-on-one confidential meeting that lasted four hours, a day before the coup.
- **“I received the orders to reinforce the Chief of Defense Forces from Zekai Aksakallı”:** Colonel Fırat Akkuş stated this during the court hearing, bringing into question the role of Special Forces Commander Zekai Aksakallı in the coup.
- **Erdoğan did not allow an investigation:** The Turkish Grand National Assembly's July 15 Investigation Commission wanted to listen to the testimonies of Chief of Defense Hulusi Akar and MIT Chief Hakan Fidan. However, President Erdoğan did not allow either of the names to appear in front of the commission.
- **“Let an international commission investigate the coup and we will accept its findings”:** The proposal of Fetullah Gülen who was blamed for masterminding the coup attempt is not accepted by the Turkish government.
- **Events not yet taken place written into the July 15 Official Report, how did that happen?** It was revealed that the official report for July 15 prepared by Serdar Coşkun, the Constitutional Order Attorney General of the time, contained written reports of events that would take place at a later date written as though they had taken place at the time of the written record.
- **Purge lists prepared early on:** Attorney General Serdar Coşkun admitted that the first cases of individuals being taken into custody and being arrested on July 16 were carried out based on the official report of the events. However, 3,000 judges and prosecutors were arrested on July 16 based on coup involvement although there is no evidence to support the allegations.
- **A project I disliked is July 15:** When Binali Yıldırım, the PM of the time, was asked by a group of journalists if there were any projects that he felt a bit too demanding, his reply, in a sarcastic tone, was "Well, July 15 was a project I did not like at all."

We urge;

- international organizations to establish an independent commission to investigate and clarify the infamous July 15 coup attempt in Turkey,
- international bodies to examine politically motivated coup charges in order to end the purge and grave human rights violations that are affecting millions of innocent lives justified through this controversial coup attempt,
- the Turkish government to end arbitrary detentions, to find the perpetrators of enforced disappearances and bring them to justice, to reinstate the unlawfully dismissed public sector workers and to ensure the rule of law in Turkey.