



UK Civil Society Women's Alliance

International Working Group

The Right Hon. Elizabeth Truss MP
Secretary of State
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs
Minister for Women
London SW1

October 30 2021

Dear Secretary of State and Minister for Women,

As co-chairs of the International Working Group of the UK Civil Society Women's Alliance (UKCSWA), an NGO umbrella for over 80 UK women's NGOs, also as feminist activists and campaigners for women's empowerment and gender equality across the globe, we write to you concerning unfair trials and detentions of women in Turkey. One of us, Margaret Owen, writes also from the perspective of a UK human rights lawyer who has often observed unfair political trials in Turkey, and as a Patron of Peace in Kurdistan.

We are appalled at the threatened expulsion this week of the 10 Western ambassadors for protesting the continued detention of Osman Kavala and Selahattin Demirtaş, and grieved that the UK Ambassador has not joined them in pleading for the release of these two men, as demanded by the European Court of Human Rights.

However, we would ask that you also use all your diplomatic powers to ask the Turkish authorities to urgently review the unfair trials of so many innocent Turkish/ Kurdish women.

They include parliamentarians, co-mayors, lawyers, journalists, academics, and women's rights activists who are now facing long prison sentences, in appalling conditions, and under fictitious charges that they are members of, or support terrorist organisations.

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Last week the former spokesperson for the Kurdish Free Women's Movement, an internationally acclaimed and courageous women's rights campaigner, Ayse Gokkan, was sentenced in a grotesquely unfair political trial to 30 years in prison. This is unacceptable and breaches European and International laws.

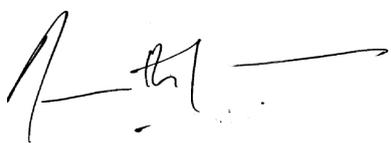
Furthermore, some two months ago a woman lawyer, also unfairly detained, Ébru Timtik, died after a 228 day hunger strike in pursuit of a fair trial. She is not the first Kurdish woman lawyer to die in such circumstances.

Moreover, the former MP and co mayor, Leyla Güven, is now again in prison serving many years through an unfair trial. She had nearly died from her long hunger strike 3 years ago.

There are hundreds of such women subject to torture and degrading treatment in Turkey's overcrowded and unhygienic gaols, where the spread of Covid19 is also threatening their lives.

We as UK women citizens are distressed that our own government is silent when confronted with Turkey's indifference to the Rule of Law, and its silence, even with clear evidence of breaches of International human rights and humanitarian law, is deafening. Perhaps the presence of Turkey's Prime Minister in Glasgow this week offers an opportunity to raise this issue?

Yours sincerely,



Annette Lawson, Ph.D; O.B.E



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Co-chairs of the International Working Group, UKCSWA

