



SIGN PEN, IPI AND MLSA'S PETITION TO FREE NEDİM TÜRFENT

To our friend and colleague Nedim Türfent

As writers, journalists, publishers, artists and activists, we have denounced the continuous deterioration of freedom of expression in Turkey. For over two years, we have witnessed the Turkish authorities pursue an unprecedented crackdown against independent voices, severely restricting fundamental rights and freedoms. Although the state of emergency has now officially been lifted, Turkey remains the largest jailer of journalists in the world. Amongst those unfairly imprisoned is you, Nedim.

Today you have spent 1000 days behind bars.

1000 days trapped in a prison cell for simply being a journalist.

Prior to your arrest in May 2016, you were covering Turkish military operations in southeast Turkey. For this, you paid a heavy price. Targeted with systematic online harassment campaigns, you received death threats online and were threatened by the security services unless you left the area, yet you refused. You stayed.

Charged with terrorism offences, you were kept in solitary confinement for nearly two years, in harrowing conditions in your four-meter-long prison cell, where you were denied access to TV, radio, books and newspapers and forced to read 'the back of detergent boxes' to pass time.

When your trial opened, you were repeatedly denied the right to be physically present in court and instead had to testify via videoconference, experiencing severe connection and interpretation issues when you tried to give evidence in your native language of Kurmanji Kurdish. Out of 20 witnesses called to testify against you, 19 retracted their statements, saying they had been extracted under torture. Despite such clear evidence of flagrant fair-trial violations, you were sentenced to eight years and nine months in prison in December 2017.

Yet you stayed strong in the face of injustice. You took out a piece of paper, a pen, and started composing poetry.

You would keep writing.

You would not be silenced.

Today, we are writing to let you know that you are not alone. We stand alongside you and unite our voices to call for your immediate and unconditional release. We will continue to

fight for the rights of journalists and writers – in Turkey and around the world – to be able to write freely, and for all those jailed for peacefully expressing their views to be free.

Hold strong, dear friend.

Signed by:

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- 3 Abdulkadir Ulumaskan
- 4 Abdûrrahman Bakir
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- 6 Adina Rosetti
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- 8 Åke Edwardson
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- 13 Alex Goldis
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