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German Association of Democratic Lawyers demands: release MÜNİP ERMİŞ immediately!

The German Association of Democratic Lawyers - Vereinigung Demokratischer Juristinnen und Juristen (VDJ) - is gravely concerned at the news that the Vice President of ÇHD - Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği - Progressive Lawyers Association, the advocate Münip Ermiş was taken into custody this morning. His house and his office were searched. His is one of the names in a search warrant which includes 26 lawyers.

We know Mr. Münip Ermiş very well as an admirable lawyer who has defended many victims of human rights violations in Turkey.

This arrest is part of a pattern of prosecutions for alleged terrorist offences that the Turkish government is bringing against its citizens, including journalists, trade union members, human rights activists, members of parliament, academics and students who are committed to a peaceful solution of the Kurdish question and to freedom of speech.

Since the government started operations giving as their reason the fight against the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), it is clear that they are using this as a pretext for oppression of organisations and individuals who have definitely no connection with FETÖ.

ÇHD is an association, which since 1974 has campaigned for the respect and defence of human rights and the defence of oppressed people in Turkey. ÇHD and all its members are fine examples of principled and courageous advocacy in Turkey. This is not the first case of government attacks against ÇHD. The trial against 22 other high ranking ÇHD members has been pending since 2013. The Association of Democratic Lawyers is gravely concerned that the arrest of lawyer Münip Ermiş is another case brought against lawyers simply because they fulfil their professional functions.

The German Association of Democratic Lawyers strongly condemns the arrest and detention of ÇHD Vice president, Münip Ermiş. The Association demands his immediate release and the end of all unjustified persecution. We demand furthermore that the Turkish government respects the professional work and role of lawyers, and complies in particular with Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as Art. 16 and 18 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. The Association of Democratic Lawyers offers their solidarity to the Turkish lawyers in their fight for human rights and justice under the present Turkish regime.