



May 12, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today as members of the U.S. Helsinki Commission and the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission regarding your upcoming meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. During your meeting, we ask that you raise the issue of American prisoners in Turkey and a Turkish national employed by the U.S. Consulate in Adana who was also jailed earlier this year.

The Government of Turkey has repeatedly extended its state of emergency authority since the failed coup attempt in July 2016. Under the state of emergency, Turkish authorities have arrested, detained, and fired scores of alleged coup plotters and thousands of others without due process. We are concerned that, under the state of emergency, at least nine Americans and one consulate employee have been detained and imprisoned on what appear to be false charges.

Among the American prisoners is Mr. Andrew Brunson, a pastor working in Turkey since 1993, who was arrested in October for his alleged support for an armed terrorist organization. The Turkish Government has repeatedly denied Pastor Brunson regular and appropriate access to legal counsel and American consular services. Unfortunately, high-level efforts to secure Mr. Brunson's release have been unsuccessful.

Another prisoner is Mr. Serkan Golge, a NASA scientist from Houston, Texas, who was vacationing with his family when he was arrested last July for supposedly threatening national security. There are at least seven more dual American-Turkish citizens like Mr. Golge, who are currently in jail on similar charges and barred by the Turkish government from receiving consular assistance from American diplomats.

Most recently, in February, Turkish authorities arrested Mr. Hamza Uluçay, a Turkish citizen, who has worked for the U.S. Consulate in Adana since 1980. Mr. Uluçay is a respected employee of the U.S. consulate. Nevertheless, and despite his frail health, he now sits in prison accused of supporting a Kurdish terrorist organization.

Your meeting with President Erdogan offers an important opportunity to advocate on behalf of these individuals. We urge you to raise these specific cases with President Erdogan and request that he take urgent action to resolve them. All American citizens should receive consular assistance and each of these individuals must be guaranteed timely and transparent due process. Raising these cases will send a strong and important message that the United States remains deeply committed to safeguarding human rights and the rule of law across the globe.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



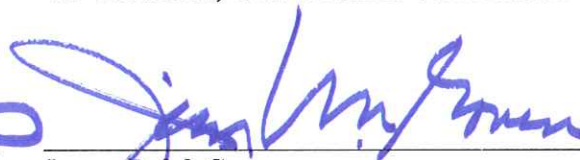
Roger F. Wicker
United States Senator
Chairman, U.S. Helsinki Commission



Christopher H. Smith
United States Representative
Co-Chairman, U.S. Helsinki Commission



Randy Hultgren
United States Representative
Co-Chair, Tom Lantos Human Rights
Commission



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Benjamin L. Cardin
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Ranking Member, U.S. Helsinki Commission



Alcee L. Hastings
United States Representative
Ranking Member, U.S. Helsinki Commission