

To:

Minister of Justice

Mr. Abdulhamit GÜL

06659 Kizilay Ankara, Turkey

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Deputy General Director

Mr. Yılmaz Çiftçi,

General Directorate of Prisons and Detention Houses

Email: cte@adalet.gov.tr

SUBJECT: Call for immediate release of lawyers Ebru Timtik and Aytaç Ünsal

Madrid, May 2020

Dear Honourable Minister GÜL,

The International Observatory of Endangered Lawyers (OIAD), founded by the French National Bar Association, the Paris Bar Association, the General Counsel of Spanish Lawyers and the Italian National Bar and counting, among its members, German, Swiss, Belgian and other national bar associations, aims to constantly monitor the situation of lawyers in the world who are threatened because of the lawful exercise of their profession and to ensure assistance to lawyers whose life, liberty, or profession is in danger.

As You know, last month the World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared a state of pandemic in response to the spread of COVID-19. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture of the Council of Europe has recommended all States to adopt all necessary measures for the protection of prisoners and prison officers, also through the adoption of measures alternative to detention.

The amnesty recently issued by Turkish authorities for the release of numerous prisoners, in order to reduce the overcrowding of prisons and the further spread of COVID-19, intentionally leaves out those convicted for charges of terrorism, among which there are several hundreds of lawyers. Some of them have been on hunger strike for a long time to obtain freedom and two of them, Ebru Timtik and Aytaç Ünsal, have been continuing the strike “to the death” since April 5.

The OIAD believes that many lawyers are being held only for reasons connected with the exercise of their profession and therefore asks that they be released at once to safeguard their health and avoid the spread of the virus and that the amnesty be applied to them as well.

The OIAD believes that the immediate release of lawyers Ebru Timtik and Aytaç Ünsal, also considering their serious health conditions, is an act of humanity.

We turn to you confident that our appeal will be answered.



Victoria Ortega Benito

President of the International Observatory for Lawyers in Danger
President of Consejo General de la Abogacía Española