

Open Letter To Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan

“As a political scientist and German parliamentarian of Turkish origin, I found the need to write this open letter to you to express my deep concern for the developments in our beautiful country, Turkey. I hope that it will be seriously considered!”

Dr. Hakki Keskin, former German Parliamentarian

My Dear Prime Minister: I can't say I was pleased when you won the 2002 elections and later became Prime Minister. Yet I sincerely defended your right to use your luck which the results of the election provided. And I made clear to my friends that the suspicion they had, either rightfully or wrongfully should be experienced. For this reason I did not agree with the requests for early elections, and supported the reforms and economic policies your government undertook in the early years. I openly express this position in my books published in German in 2005 and 2006.

I expressed this view, as a Kemalist with a leftist world view that secularism is the most important cement in the country. Some of my friends who shared my world view said I was wrong, and time would tell.

Truthfully I have increasingly seen that my friends who said I was wrong have been correct, especially considering policy which you have undertaken since the beginning of 2007. In my opinion, the greatest mistake you and your party have made is to drive the Turkish public into a very deep polarization. I don't yet want to believe that you are doing so knowingly and willingly. Yet this is the situation in our country, and your government is responsible for it.

As a result of this ultimately worrisome development, the pressure and intimidation policies implemented in absence of democratic and unlawful systems against Turkey's lawful and patriotic citizens, can not ever be accepted. We clearly see that under the name "Ergenekon", and in the framework of "judicial operations," the real purpose is for educators who criticize your government,

members of the media, those that defend secular and modernity are charged with things they do not deserve, detentions, even those that are detained for reasons unknown. You should not doubt that this very soon will be clearly seen by the public in the western countries. As it is clearly seen, these pressures are retaliation and vengeance implemented by supporters of a Sharia state against true Atatürk supporters, enlightened, and secular people.

Let there be no doubt that no one would object to legally undertaking steps against military or civilian persons who in the past or currently have been involved with illegal activities. However, it is the greatest injustice to charge under "Ergenekon" allegations of coup plotters, racist nationalism and murderers who would never come together in ideology, political or ethnic values. These practices are purposefully carried out on behalf of a judiciary which is said to be independent in the framework of seeking revenge.

If these operations are carried out as asserted by an independent jury, then it is very clear that these practices are in no way compatible with a truly lawful state. A lawful state would never permit the phones of hundreds of thousands of people to be tapped without a court order. Without a judge's order, no one's home can be searched, without specific evidence, no one can be taken from their beds at midnight and paraded in front of invited media representatives and receive the treatment afforded to thugs. A lawful state would never permit such practice. If Turkey is claiming that it is a truly lawful state, then these actions are unlawful. But if these practices are carried out in

accordance with current laws, then the laws are not compatible with a truly lawful and democratic state.

The search of Professor Turkan Saylan's home, whose efforts are to provide education opportunities for children and youth who may otherwise not have those opportunities, the questioning of the Association of Contemporary Life's directors, even their arrest, the questioning of media representatives as if they were criminals, such as if the 83 year old respected journalist Ilhan Selcuk, is in no way compatible with the understanding of a lawful state.

I would like to make this clear as a political scientist and political observer: This situation which our Turkey finds itself in can carry our country into an extremely suspicious situation which you would in no way like to be in. It is firstly your responsibility to save Turkey from this polarization and provide again social and political peace hastily. Again, it is one of your and your government's prime responsibilities to demonstrate virtue and tolerance, and show that it is not a crime to criticize you or your government, but in contrast, a citizen's right and responsibility, protecting them from unjust and unjustified accusations, even if they are your political adversaries, enlightened, contemporary and secular thinking writers, journalists, educators, civil society and career organizations.

I am inviting you to quickly, and without further delay, to take measures necessary for the Turkish public to live in health, peace, brotherhood, and to end this polarization. Believe me that you will be the one who benefits most from this.

Respectfully yours,
Prof. Dr. Hakki Keskin