

## Joint Civil Society Statement

22 May 2025

According to the official statistics published by the Turkish Ministry of Justice on April 7, 2025, there are 403,060 inmates in Turkish prisons. In November 2023, the number was 273,405. Accordingly, the overcapacity is over 100,000, the overcapacity rate is 34.41%.

In December 2023, in the case of Ilerde and others, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the conditions (overcrowding) in which the applicants were held in Turkish prisons violated the prohibition of inhuman treatment.

According to the credible report of Turkish human rights NGOs and also reports of the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Parliament, overcrowding in prisons causes systemic and serious problems in access to health, hygiene and food, with inmates sleeping on the floor and in turns.

It has been reported that the Ministry of Justice is preparing a new temporary parole law to reduce prison overcrowding. However, it is regrettable that similar laws passed in 2020 and 2023 discriminate against political prisoners who have been imprisoned under Turkey's overly broad anti-terrorism provision (Article 314 of the Turkish Penal Code). This means that lawyers, journalists, politicians, artists, judges and prosecutors, and human rights defenders who have been imprisoned or convicted on terrorism-related charges will not benefit from early release.

The undersigned organizations call on the Turkish government to avoid any discriminatory exception and to respect the basic human rights of all prisoners, in particular, prisoners who are elderly, sick, disabled and with children should be released from prisons immediately.

We call on the Turkish government to use such a release as an opportunity to comply with the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Committee, which found that imprisonment under Article 314 of the TPC violates the principle of no punishment without law.

- MEDEL (Magistrats Européens pour la Démocratie et les Libertés) (Strasbourg)
- European Criminal Bar Association (Amsterdam)
- L'Ordre des avocats de Genève / Geneva Bar Association (Geneva)
- Italian Federation for Human Rights (Rome)
- International Human Rights Foundation (The Hague)
- Justice for Rule of Law ASBL (Brussels)
- Statewatch (London)
- The Good Lobby Profs (Brussels)
- Human Rights Solidarity (London)
- The Arrested Lawyers Initiative (Brussels)
- Foundation Day of the Endangered Lawyer (Amsterdam)
- International Human Rights Advisors (London)