

30 Days for Freedom

4 April - 3 May 2014

#FreethePress

WAN-IFRA www.worldpressfreedomday.org

His Excellency President Abdullah Gül
President of the Republic of Turkey
Cumhurbaşkanlığı Genel Sekreterliği
06689 Çankaya, Ankara
Tel: (+90 312) 470 23 08
Fax: (+90 312) 470 13 16
E-mail: cumhurbaskanligi@tccb.gov.tr
@cbabdullahgul

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Vekaletler Caddesi Başbakanlık Merkez Bina P.K.
06573 Kızılay, Ankara
Tel: (+90 312) 422 10 00
@RT_Erdogan

29 April 2014

His Excellency President Gül, Prime Minister Erdoğan,

We are writing as part of the global online campaign '30 Days for Freedom' to call for the release of Tayyip Temel and all journalists imprisoned in Turkey for simply doing their job.

Tayyip Temel has been imprisoned in the south-eastern city of Diyarbakir since October 2011. The editor-in-chief of the daily Kurdish-language newspaper *Azadiya Welat* is accused of supporting terrorism by covering the activities of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

We are deeply concerned that the only evidence presented against Mr. Temel included one of his own articles as well as wiretapped phone recordings with co-workers and news sources, including members of Kurdish political parties. It would appear that Mr. Temel's journalistic work has been used to condemn him.

The Kurdish issue has proven a particularly dangerous context for journalists, as their coverage risks suspicion and accusations of "aiding terrorism." In a mass arrest by authorities in 2011, 46 journalists and media workers were accused under anti-terrorist legislation of being members of the banned Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK), an umbrella organisation that includes the PKK. There has been a stream of releases in the trial since then, but many have not been fully cleared of the charges.

Your Excellency, Prime Minister, until the recent release of eight journalists at the end of March, Turkey had been the leading jailer of journalists worldwide for the past two years. Those released have not had their charges fully dropped and the threat of jail still looms over many, while hefty sentences and the country's anti-terrorism laws allow defendants to be detained for lengthy periods before being formally charged. Recent moves to block access to Internet and social media sites are further indication of Turkey's clampdown on critical, independent voices.

We therefore urge you to respect a free and independent press and to stop criminalising journalists. We call on you to free Tayyip Temel and all other journalists imprisoned in Turkey.

Sincerely,

#FreethePress
The 30 Days for Freedom campaign

Organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WAN-IFRA) and the World Editors Forum, the '30 Days for Freedom' campaign aims to highlight the plight of imprisoned journalists worldwide in the 30 days leading up to 3 May, World Press Freedom Day.

www.wan-ifra.org / www.worldpressfreedomday.org

