

THE COLOURS OF

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The world we live in is a multilayered endeavor. More than seven billion of us speak thousands of languages and pray to at least as many gods. People fight for their freedom, their rights, their love and their happiness, and their efforts pay off: they help turn the world into a diverse and more colorful place – but not everywhere. It might not always make headlines in the news or flood our timelines on social media, but in many countries people fight for democracy and justice every day. One of these countries is Turkey.

In Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Turkey, the year 2017 is not colorful but black and white. The world is divided into those loyal to Erdoğan and those who are not, the latter being labeled as “terrorists,” “traitors” or “enemies” by his increasingly authoritarian regime. Opposition – no matter from whom – is punished with full rigour. It is clear to us that the Turkish government has been using the abortive coup of 15 July 2016 as an opportunity and pretext to silence every single oppositional voice in the country. Dissenting opinions are censored; politicians, journalists, intellectuals, human rights activists, academics and many others imprisoned. There are also many forms of resistance to this tyranny – within the parliament and beyond it. The aim is to prevent Turkey from turning into a willful dictatorship of fear and repression.

These political and societal forces facing repression by the Erdoğan regime deserve our respect, support and solidarity. We will not leave Turkey to Erdoğan's tyranny but stand in solidarity with all democratic forces in Turkey.

As trivial as it may sound, there is no democracy without an opposition. The systematic persecution of the opposition People's Democratic Party (HDP), the imprisonment of its co-chairs Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, as well as 13 further HDP deputies, four of whom have since been released, is an attack on Turkey's democratic plurality that we cannot accept.

We stand with those who fight for democracy and justice. We demand the immediate release of HDP co-chairs and other deputies in Turkish prisons. They represent over six million voters in Turkey who arduously struggle to establish a democratic future wherein human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law would be respected.

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