



JOINT STATEMENT

Cartooning for Peace, Cartoon Movement & Cartoonists Rights Network International call for release of Musa Kart, political cartoonist for Cumhuriyet newspaper, jailed one month ago.

Musa Kart, a world-renowned political cartoonist for Cumhuriyet newspaper, Istanbul, is one of several staff pending trial for "crimes on behalf of the Fethullahist Terror Organisation and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)". Accused of collusion in last summer's attempted coup in Turkey, these journalists are just a few of the great many academics, public servants and media workers who have been fired, detained, questioned or jailed by the Erdoğan regime in recent weeks.

David Kaye, the UN's special rapporteur visited Turkey in November and said: "Across the board, the Government is imposing draconian measures that limit freedom of expression [...] the measures are not only drastic and disproportionate, but they lack any form of transparency."

Kart's regular panel in the paper has been printed with a blank space since his arrest. Today, three major international cartoonists' groups call for his release.

Cartooning for Peace is a global network of 147 editorial cartoonists who fight, through humour, for the respect of cultural diversity and freedoms. CFP is committed to the promotion of the editorial cartoon as a means of defending human rights; the use of the cartoons' educational value to denounce all forms of intolerance; providing support and visibility to press cartoonists who are prevented from working freely or under threat.

Cartoon Movement is the internet's leading platform for high quality political cartoons and comics journalism with over 400 contributors across every continent.

Cartoonists Rights Network International is the human rights organisation for cartoonist whose work leads to direct threats against their livelihood, liberty, life and limb. Each year they present a Courage in Editorial Cartooning Award and Musa Kart is a past recipient.

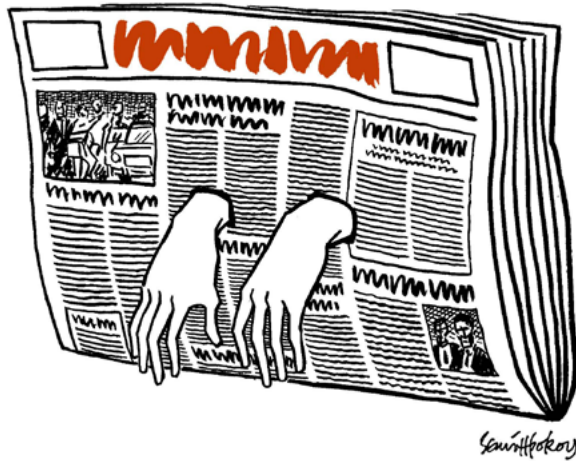
All three are committed to freedom of expression as a fundamental human right.



Joint statement from CFP, Cartoon Movement & CRNI - 5th December 2016

On the 31st of October the homes of a number of staff from Cumhuriyet, Turkey's oldest national daily newspaper, were raided and under emergency powers they were detained for questioning without legal representation for five days.

On the 5th of November nine individuals were formally arrested and jailed pending trial for "committing crimes on behalf of the Fethullahist Terror Organisation and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)".



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This came amid a freezing of internet access and a wave of arrests across the country, all in an apparent effort to purge supporters of last summer's attempted coup from Turkey's mass media and opposition parties.

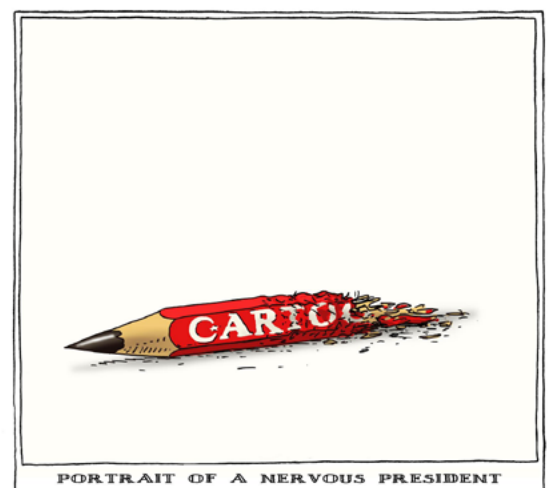
Organisations for the defence of freedom of expression and the liberty of journalists have already condemned the Cumhuriyet raid and arrests as brutal suppression of vital, critical voices in what purports to be a democratic nation.

We wish to draw special attention to Cumhuriyet cartoonist Musa Kart's case in particular because this represents the third attempt by President Recep Erdoğan to silence him after suing for libel in 2005 and slander in 2014. On this occasion a punitive fine or jail sentence is not the worst possible outcome, as objectionable as it would be.

If granted his stated ambition Erdoğan will reintroduce the death penalty specifically for those said to be involved in organising the coup. Clearly there is a real threat to Musa's life should his trial proceed and he is found guilty of the charges given. We are witnessing an effort by the president to exact revenge on someone he has long considered an enemy.



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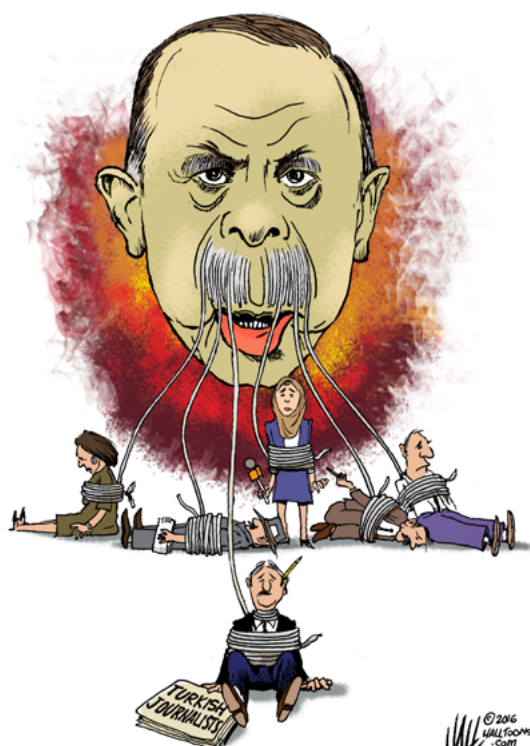


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It has been well reported that Erdoğan has taken an almost industrial approach in responding to personal offence over criticisms in the mass media. Where, we ask, is the magnanimity shown earlier this year when the many hundreds of so-called 'insult cases' he had instructed his government to pursue were dropped? On what basis can the drawing of satirical cartoons be considered a crime, much less an act of terrorism?

We call upon the leadership of every democratic nation to redouble their efforts in dissuading the Turkish government from its present course and demand the immediate release of our friend and colleague Musa Kart.

NB - at the time of writing Musa Kart and colleagues are in Silivri prison, Istanbul; family members have visited and say his health is good and spirit unbowed.



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