



The Honourable Prime Minister of Turkey, Binali Yıldırım  
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15 November 2016

Dear Prime Minister Yıldırım,

**Re: De facto closure of Evrensel Publishing House and ongoing detentions of writers**

The International Publishers Association (IPA) is the global federation of national publishers associations, representing all aspects of worldwide book and journal publishing. Established in 1896, IPA's mission is to promote and protect publishing and to raise awareness of publishing as a force for economic, cultural and political development. Around the world, IPA fights for freedom to publish and promotes copyright, literacy and accessibility. We have 64 members from 59 countries, including the Turkish Publishers Association.

As a non-governmental organization (NGO) concerned with the freedom to publish worldwide, we were extremely troubled to learn of the de facto closure of Evrensel Basım Yayın (Evrensel Publishing House) by actions carried out under the extended State of Emergency measures decree, promulgated on 29 October.

The Turkish Government has publicly given assurances that its post-15 July security operations would only target people and organizations with suspected links to the coup attempt. There is no excusing any attempt by the military or others to seize power using violence, but the subsequent purge by your government has visibly extended to legitimate writers, publishers and media outlets with no links to the coup. Evrensel Basım Yayın is one such business.

In addition, we are gravely concerned by the continuing detention of scores of journalists and writers, in particular the internationally admired author Aslı Erdoğan and linguist Necmiye Alpay. Both women stand accused of terrorism and, unfathomably, the prosecution is pressing for 'aggravated life' sentences in both cases. However, it is clear that these talented Turkish writers are held solely for exercising their human right to express opinions, and that those opinions happened to deviate from the Government line.

Today, International Day of the Imprisoned Writer, we urge you to authorize their immediate and unconditional release and to allow all detained writers and journalists due access to lawyers. If they are not to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence and promptly tried, in accordance with international fair trial standards, they should be released. Finally, we would appeal to your government not to use the state of emergency to suppress peaceful dissent, civil society, media and the delivery of education.

Aside from questions of international legal obligations, the ongoing, ever widening purge does Turkey a profound disservice by leaving many thousands of people unemployed and further narrowing the country's once rich media and publishing space.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Charkin, President