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Human rights violations in Turkey under the state of emergency

Written question No. 710 to the Committee of Ministers

by Mr Pieter OMTZIGT, Netherlands, Group of the European People's Party

After the failed coup attempt, the President of Turkey took exceptional measures. The state of emergency was declared and Turkey submitted a formal notice of derogation from the European Convention on Human Rights as foreseen under Article 15 of the Convention.

These exceptional powers are not just used against the alleged coup plotters, but against tens of thousands of Turkish citizens.

More than 2 700 judges and prosecutors were almost immediately suspended and many have been arrested. The highest courts have just been overhauled. The Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the European Union views the current events, in particular the dismissal or arrest of thousands of Judges, as an attack on the independence of the Judiciary in Turkey, as well as a systemic threat to the Rule of Law in this Member State of the Council of Europe.

As many as sixty thousand civil servants were suspended or lost their jobs without investigation and without a right to appeal.

The police now have the power to detain some suspects for up to 30 days without them being taken before a judge. The right of access to a lawyer has been restricted, as well as the confidentiality of the client-lawyer relationship. At the same time officials have been given almost total immunity for their actions under the special decree.

Amnesty International claims to have credible reports of severe beatings, torture and rape in Turkish prisons.

The Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks has raised very serious questions regarding the compatibility of all these measures with the European Convention on Human Rights and rule of law principles, even taking into account the derogation in place.

Mr Omtzigt,

To ask the Committee of Ministers,

- Can you cite one other comparable instance in which a Council of Europe Member State has dismissed and arrested citizens on such a large scale?
- Are you willing to ask the Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) to pay a quick visit with a large team to Turkey and to report publicly on its findings?
- What statement will you make on human rights in Council of Europe Member State Turkey and what actions will you take towards the Turkish authorities?

A reply within two weeks would be highly appreciated and is necessary considering the emergency situation in Turkey.

