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Aggravated life imprisonment, an ongoing violation of the European Convention on Human Rights

Written question No. 784 to the Committee of Ministers

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When, on 15 February 1999, Abdullah Öcalan was brought to Turkey, the “aggravated life imprisonment” did not exist in Turkish law. This new regime targeted Mr Öcalan specifically and was first imposed on him. In 2014, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that aggravated life imprisonment with no possibility of parole constituted a violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights which prohibits torture, and “inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” in the Öcalan case. A similar judgment was delivered in three other cases by the Court.

Since 2014, Turkey has not made any amendments to its law or concrete improvements vis-à-vis the Court’s decision. Now the “aggravated life imprisonment” sentence has been applied to thousands of prisoners, both political and criminal. Despite repeated requests, the Turkish Ministry of Justice has refrained from even disclosing exactly how many people have been given this sentence.

Ms Castel

To ask the Committee of Ministers:

Over the past nine years since the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, what initiatives has the Committee of Ministers taken to ensure that Turkey complies with these judgments of the Court?

