



July 15, 2020

AFSV Statement on the Fourth Anniversary of July 15 Staged Coup Attempt

For another year, we remember the more than 250 lives lost tragically in Turkey on the fateful night of July 15, 2016. Yet still we are no closer to an unbiased accounting of that night.

In the four years since the July 15 staged coup attempt in Turkey, the Recep Tayyip Erdogan government has descended into dictatorship. With political control over all branches of government, including the judiciary and the constitutional court, nearly every media outlet and vast slices of the business community, Erdogan has succeeded in leveraging minority voter support into an amount of power once unthinkable in Turkey. The fateful events of that night were the tipping point for Erdogan's power grab, and no explanation offered by the Turkish government has been subjected to true scrutiny. Part of the responsibility for the lives lost that night belongs to Erdogan, who, at a minimum, left the matter in the dark by stalling and obstructing the parliamentary investigation of the incident. At worst, he possibly was in collusion with some perpetrators.

What is indisputable is that Erdogan is responsible for ruining hundreds of thousands of innocent lives over the flimsiest of excuses or affiliations. Half a million Turkish people have been "investigated," over a hundred thousand lost jobs or property, tens of thousands have been jailed or detained, thousands have been tortured or killed. Hundreds of mothers in prisons with their babies and infant children are the clearest witnesses to his persecution. What happened on July 16 and the following months constitute crimes against humanity.

Now, in a year when the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on the world, Erdogan has refused to free political prisoners, in effect sentencing them to death from the ravages of the virus. Erdogan needs sustained pressure from the international community to stop Turkey's gross human rights violations and to release political prisoners who are at the mercy of a virus in notoriously inhumane conditions.

About Alliance for Shared Values

The Alliance for Shared Values (AFSV) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves as a voice for cultural organizations affiliated with Hizmet, a civil society movement inspired by prominent preacher and peace advocate Fethullah Gülen. The Alliance strives to promote peace and social harmony by helping reduce misinformation and false stereotypes about any or all ethnic, cultural and religious communities. To learn more about the Alliance, please visit www.afsv.org.

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