

Statement by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) on recent events in Turkey

Strasbourg, 19.12.2016 - ECRI firmly condemns the coup attempt on 15 July 2016 and the series of terrorist attacks in Turkey. It deeply regrets the suffering of the victims of these tragic events, including the latest bomb attacks on 10 and 17 December 2016.

In keeping with the recommendations made in its [fifth Report on Turkey](#), ECRI emphasises the need to observe strictly the rule of law and the principle of non-discrimination, as embodied in the European Convention on Human Rights, in respect of all persons in Turkey.

Based on its mandate to combat racism and racial discrimination, ECRI wishes to express its deep concern about some of the measures taken by the Turkish authorities in reaction to the coup attempt, and in particular on the effects they have on Kurdish people. The Turkish government has invoked the need to combat terrorism to justify the measures it is taking. ECRI recalls that it had already expressed concern about the situation in South East Turkey and the severe measures taken there in its fifth Report on Turkey.

Since these observations were made, the situation has further deteriorated. On 11 September, approximately 25 elected mayors were replaced in South East Turkey for allegedly supporting terrorism. Later scores of pro-Kurdish politicians and at least a dozen mostly Kurdish parliamentarians of the Peoples' Democratic Party were arrested on similar charges – after their parliamentary immunity had been lifted. In addition, a number of media outlets, including Kurdish ones, have been closed down and the security operations in the South East – and the subsequent suffering of civilians - have intensified.

ECRI reiterates the statement made in its last report that “*the fight against terrorism has to be carried out in full conformity with international human rights law and without direct or indirect discrimination*”. While ECRI considers that states have a right and duty to take all adequate measures to combat terrorism and to counter attacks on democracy, these measures must be proportionate, non-discriminatory, and in no circumstances undertaken to silence vulnerable groups or to suppress political opposition and criticism of official policies, or have that effect.

Recalling the principles of the rule of law and non-discrimination, ECRI stands ready to continue its dialogue with Turkey on the implementation of its recommendations.

ECRI is a human rights body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts, which monitors problems of racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, intolerance and discrimination on grounds such as “race”, national/ethnic origin, colour, citizenship, religion and language (racial discrimination); it prepares reports and issues recommendations to member States.

For more information on ECRI: www.coe.int/ecri