**THE RECENT STATUTORY DECREE NO. 696 AND THE DEMISE OF RULE OF LAW IN TURKEY**

Honorable Senator/Congressman,

Since the July 15 alleged coup attempt, which President Erdogan defined as a blessing from God, Turkish democracy and justice have been continuously deteriorating. In less than 24 hours after the July 15th, Turkey woke up to the widespread chaos; unresolved crimes, kidnappings, coffee shop raids, corruption and many illegal acts that would are accustomed to Third World Countries. The state has engaged in many illegal activities.

The Erdogan regime passed several statutory decrees including the Decree number 675, to provide impunity to the government officials who have acted in an illegal manner toward masses demonized by the government aided media, in the direction of Erdogan regime's policies. Nonetheless, it protects them from being prosecuted for any crimes they commit.

Recently, Erdogan’s regime has issued another statutory decree (KHK) to empower all citizens to intervene with weapons and other ways of violence against those who are demonized and labeled as terrorist by the regime. Accordingly, any person or group announced as a terrorist organization by the government may be deprived of all fundamental human rights. That means anyone who unfairly treats those targeted individuals will get impunity from legal or criminal penalties.

The new arrangement is a declaration of **the demise of rule of law**, and its replacement with a new state order. In recent times in Turkey, the concepts of acts of terror and terrorism have ceased to be clad in terms of legality. These terms are now merely political in nature. A new concept as **'unarmed terrorist organization'** has been introduced the courtrooms in Turkey. In the noted decree-law, the concepts related to acts of terror or the term, "continuation of acts of terror", has not been clarified. This issue is the **greatest threat** to the hundreds of thousands of people who are subject to or potentially will face unfair trials in the country.

The expression of "suppression of the continuity of the actions" mentioned in the decree-law stipulates that any kind of intervention in the name of suppressing actions regarded as a continuation of actions related to the coup attempt and acts of terror cannot be prosecuted.

According to this, when someone who has been purged with decree-laws gets in touch with someone else in a similar situation for any reason, they are accepted to potentially have a connection to the July 15th coup attempt.

It is feared that the **government will use the mafia-like and paramilitary organizations to kidnap, torture and kill the dissidents since they could** get immunity from prosecution and will not be held responsible for their actions.

In this context, it is clearly seen that the AKP government seeks to establish a **Turkish version of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps**.

We ask the relevant committees in the congress and senate to put consistent pressure on the Government of Turkey to take all necessary measures to end immediately these decrees to protect the fundamental rights of all groups in Turkey.

Yours Sincerely,