

## STATEMENT OF THE TURKEY TRIBUNAL OFFICIAL INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS

Friday, 24 September 2021

### Observations by the Observers

The Turkey Tribunal of 20-24 September 2021 held in Geneva have been thoroughly prepared and executed.

The expertise, experience and independence of the rapporteurs has been clear and the quality of the reports have met very high standards, with careful referencing and documentation of the reported facts.

The testimonies have been collected from a wide and representative range of groups subject to human rights abuses – the Gülen movement, Kurdish civilians and journalists, socialist activists, the LGBTQI+ community, the judiciary and the press. It has also been made clear throughout the hearings that the aim is not to evaluate the innocence or guilt of the witnesses, but to investigate the human rights abuses and the injustice they have been subjected to.

In absence of any representatives for the Turkish authorities, the judges have posed critical questions. It has also been clarified that the material and invitation have been delivered in due order to make room also for a response.

The organizers state that all participants are taking part pro bono with only travel and accommodation expenses covered. The resources are crowd funded with over 200 donors contributing. Whom they are is not recorded. It should be noted that most of the volunteers who have arranged the Tribunal identify as being part of Hizmet/the Gülen Movement. It is therefore highly likely that much of the funding could also come from supporters of the movement.

However, the independence of the judges, registrars, rapporteurs, and observers have been stressed and well documented. As said, the Tribunal has not assessed the guilt or independence of the cases reported and heard. The Tribunal has investigated evidence of torture, abductions, restrictions of press freedom, impunity and restrictions in judicial independence and access to justice in Turkey. These investigations have rested on solid reports and critical scrutiny of testimonies and evidence.

### **The Observers of the Turkey Tribunal are**

#### **Marie Arena**

Member of the European Parliament (MEP) since 2014 The chairwoman of European Parliament Subcommittee on Human Rights

#### **Kathleen Van Brempt**

Belgian social-democratic politician and member of Vooruit Member of the European Parliament (MEP)



**Filipe Marques**

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Investigative Journalist and Filmmaker

For more information: <https://turkeytribunal.com/the-observers/>

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