



PRESS RELEASE

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## Turkey Must Act on UN Experts' Call to Free Cumhuriyet Journalists

*The Government of Turkey must heed the UN experts' call to free detained journalists from the independent newspaper Cumhuriyet, recipient of the 2016 Right Livelihood Award.*

The Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, an independent, international panel of legal experts set up under the UN Human Rights Council, has just released its [findings](#) stating that the ongoing detention of Cumhuriyet journalists is arbitrary and calling for their immediate release. The statement comes just days before the trial of 19 Cumhuriyet journalists and staff is scheduled to begin in Istanbul next Monday, 24 July.

"The UN Working Group's findings that Turkey violated its obligations under international law by detaining award-winning Cumhuriyet journalists for over 200 days is a significant victory both for freedom of expression in Turkey and for journalists around the world. The opinion sends a clear signal that vaguely drafted anti-terrorism laws cannot be legitimately used by governments to silence independent journalists from reporting the truth. We call upon Turkey to respect the Working Group's opinion and release all Cumhuriyet journalists without delay, and to cease all investigation and prosecution of these journalists," says Sharan Srinivas, Director of Research and Advocacy at the Right Livelihood Award Foundation.

The Working Group further expressed concern that "the use of emergency decree laws may exert serious chilling effects on the legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of opinion and expression" in the country.

The Turkish Government had an opportunity to provide its arguments during the Working Group's consideration of the case, and has now six months to report on its compliance with the panel's recommendations.

### For more information, please contact:

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More information about the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention:  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Detention/Pages/WGADIndex.aspx>

The full text of *Opinion No. 41/2017 concerning 10 individuals associated with the Cumhuriyet newspaper (Turkey)* is available here:

[http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session78/A\\_HRC\\_WGAD\\_2017\\_41\\_EN.docx](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session78/A_HRC_WGAD_2017_41_EN.docx)



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## About the Right Livelihood Award

The Right Livelihood Award was established in 1980 to "honour and support courageous people and organisations offering visionary and exemplary solutions to the root causes of global problems". It has become widely known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize' and there are now 166 Laureates from 68 countries. In addition to presenting the annual award in Stockholm, the Right Livelihood Award Foundation supports its Laureates, particularly those who may be in danger due to the nature of their work.