

URGENT ACTION

RELEASE ARBITRARILY IMPRISONED ACTIVIST

Human rights defender Enes Hocaogulları was placed in arbitrary pre-trial detention on 5 August after being detained at Ankara Esenboğa Airport upon his return to Türkiye from a Council of Europe conference in Strasbourg. He is charged with ‘publicly disseminating misleading information’ and ‘inciting the public to hatred and enmity’ under an indictment dated 8 August. The charges are based solely on a short speech he delivered on 27 March at the 48th session of the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, where he spoke about rights violations during mass protests following the detention the Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu in the previous week. He must be immediately and unconditionally released. No one should be prosecuted for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression and speaking out against human rights violations.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mr Gökhan Karaköse
Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor
Ankara Adliyesi
Hacı Bayram Veli Mahallesi
Atatürk Bulvarı No:40
06050 Sıhhiye/Ankara
Email: ankaracbsozelkalem@adalet.gov.tr
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Dear Mr. Gökhan Karaköse,

I am writing to express my deep concern over the arbitrary detention of human rights defender **Enes Hocaogulları**, who has been held in pre-trial detention since 5 August, following his arrest at Ankara Esenboğa Airport upon returning to Türkiye.

Enes Hocaogulları participated in a Council of Europe conference as a youth delegate from Türkiye, where he delivered a short speech highlighting human rights violations that occurred during the mass protests following the detention of the Mayor of Istanbul on 19 March. Human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have documented serious violations during these protests, including excessive use of force by police, unlawful use of less lethal weapons against peaceful protesters, and threats of sexual violence in custody.

The comments contained in Enes Hocaogulları’s speech are protected under Türkiye’s domestic laws, as well as the international human rights law and standards codified in treaties to which Türkiye is a party. Furthermore, Türkiye has an obligation to protect human rights defenders from arbitrary and abusive investigations, prosecutions and detention.

I urge you to ensure that Enes Hocaogulları is released immediately and unconditionally.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Enes Hoccoğulları is a 23-year-old human rights defender and LGBTI+ rights activist. In February, he was selected as a youth delegate from Türkiye to the 48th session of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Strasbourg. In a speech he made on 27 March, he referred to the crackdown on mass protests that had taken place in the preceding week, following the detention and imprisonment of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu.

Enes Hoccoğulları was detained on 5 August at the Ankara Esenboğa Airport and remanded in pre-trial detention the same day. He is accused of 'publicly disseminating misleading information' under Article 217/A of the Turkish penal code, an offence carrying a prison sentence of one to three years. He also faces an additional baseless charge of 'inciting the public to hatred and enmity' under Article 216/1 of the penal code, which carries the same penalty. If convicted on both charges, Enes Hoccoğulları could face between two to six years in prison solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

The indictment against Enes Hoccoğulları cites excerpts from his speech, including: *"I was there from day one; I was there when police forces used disproportionate brutality towards us including pepper spray, plastic bullets and water cannons. I was there when my peers were detained and went through strip searches"* and *"I was fighting for democracy in the streets last week... the youth has had enough, we have had enough and we are ready to go on the streets to regain our freedoms."* These remarks are presented as evidence of wrongdoing on the ground that they *"caused a reaction and complaints on social media where users tagged the General Security Directorate and the Ministry of Justice."*

With its overly broad and vague wording and its arbitrary use particularly targeting journalists since its introduction in 2022, Article 217/A of the penal code is incompatible with Türkiye's human rights obligation to protect the right to freedom of expression. Further, Article 216/1 is broadly defined and far wider than the permissible limitations to the right to freedom of expression found in international law. Amnesty International has called on Türkiye to repeal Article 217/A and ensure that all laws regulating the right to freedom of expression, including those intended to address disinformation, are brought in line with Türkiye's obligations under international law. The organization has long called for Article 216/1 to be amended to ensure that it is only used to prohibit advocacy of hatred amounting to violence or discrimination in line with requirements found within international human rights standards.

Under international human rights law and standards, the state has the ultimate responsibility to protect and promote human rights and consequently, protect human rights defenders who highlight human rights violations. States have the duty to prevent human rights violations and abuses committed against human rights defenders and related to their work as Human Rights Defenders, and to ensure that they can carry out their work in a safe and enabling environment.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Turkish, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 14 October 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Enes Hoccoğulları (he/they)