

Dear Minister

I am writing this to express my grave concern on a fashion designer and LGBTI activist Barbaros Şansal who is being held in pre-trial detention, accused of 'inciting the public to hatred or hostility' for a video message and tweet he shared on social media on New Year's Eve. He was detained on the territory of northern Cyprus and extradited to Turkey the next day. He was assaulted on arrival in Istanbul on the airport apron. According to his lawyer, the authorities in the territory of northern Cyprus had not provided a document attesting to a formal extradition decision.

I am calling on the Turkish authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Barbaros Şansal from pre-trial detention and drop the charges against him. I believe that the authorities should start a criminal investigation into the assault on Barbaros Şansal and bring all those found to be responsible to justice.

I also need to add that the paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 216 of the penal code should be repealed.

Your attention on this matter would be highly appreciated.

Sincerely,