

Minister of Justice of the Republic of Turkey  
Mr Abdülhamit Gül  
Adalet Bakanlığı  
06659 Ankara, Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 419 33 70  
Email: info@adalet.gov.tr

Dear Minister,

I am deeply concerned about the 4 March decision of the Istanbul Heavy Penal Court No. 30 accepting the indictment against Osman Kavala, Yiğit Aksakođlu and 14 other prominent civil society figures, accusing them of 'attempting to overthrow the government or prevent it from performing its duties' during the Gezi Park protests of 2013.

These protests were peaceful in character and there is no credible evidence linking any of the individuals named in this indictment with acts of violence or public disorder. The indictment is filled with unsubstantiated accusations that attempt to rewrite the history of the Gezi Park protests and silence some of Turkey's most prominent civil society figures. If found guilty on these baseless charges, those accused could face life imprisonment without parole.

Osman Kavala has already been remanded in pre-trial detention for over 16 months and Yiğit Aksakođlu for almost four months based on these spurious claims, an imprisonment that represents an arbitrary deprivation of their liberty. Acceptance of the indictment, given that it should mean the prosecution and the court both believe all relevant evidence has been collected to start the prosecution, further exposes the arbitrariness of Osman Kavala and Yiğit Aksakođlu's continued incarceration.

I therefore urge you to do all in your power to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Osman Kavala and Yiğit Aksakođlu and that the charges against all 16 individuals are dropped.

Yours sincerely,