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DRAFT RESOLUTION: CONDEMNING THE REPRESSION AND POTENTIAL CLOSURE OF THE PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC PARTY (HDP) IN TURKEY

The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), the third largest party in the Turkish Parliament, which received almost six million votes in the last election, has been the object of severe attacks and repression since breaking through the 10% election threshold in June 2015, and has been especially targeted in the wider clampdown on freedom of speech and democracy that followed the failed coup attempt of 2016. There are currently thousands of HDP members in prison, including former MPs and mayors and the party's former co-chairs, Figen Yüksekdağ and Selahattin Demirtaş. 108 leading party members face potential life imprisonment without parole in the 'Kobanê Case', for calling on people to protest in support of the city of Kobanê when it was under attack by ISIS in 2014. And, based on this case, there is a further case to ban the party itself, which would make it the sixth pro-Kurdish party to be closed down in Turkey. All this has been made possible by an increasingly politicised judiciary. The HDP embodies the attempt to find a political solution to the Kurdish problem and to other issues related to fundamental rights and freedoms, and its harassment and potential closure would only aggravate the Kurdish conflict and destroy people's trust in the already emaciated democratic system in Turkey.

The Progressive Alliance calls on Turkey to respect democracy, freedom of speech and association, and the rule of law, and to end the repression of political opposition. We note, especially, the continued harassment of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), including the imprisonment of its members and its threatened closure, and call for an immediate reversal of this attack on democracy – an attack that also extinguishes the possibility of a parliamentary route to resolve the Kurdish issue peacefully and to restore rights and freedoms in general.

We condemn the mass detentions of HDP members, including the party's former co-chairs - Figen Yüksekdağ and Selahattin Demirtaş - other MPs and mayors; and we condemn the ongoing attempt to get the HDP banned. We call for political prisoners to be released, for the politically motivated charges against party members to be dropped, and the proposed ban on the HDP to be rejected.

We call on Turkey to respect the democratic choices of the electorate, and to refrain from dismissing and detaining elected representatives and from replacing elected mayors with appointed trustees. And we call for those elected to be reinstated.

We condemn the increasing misuse of the Turkish judicial system to restrict opposition figures and critical organisations, and we call for an independent judiciary with fully separated powers.

We call on Turkey to stop punishing those who criticise the government and state authorities, and to allow freedom of speech; and we call on Turkey to stop restricting and attacking protests and demonstrations and to allow freedom of assembly.

We call for Turkey to observe its obligation to comply with rulings by the European Court of Human Rights and immediately release the HDP's former co-chair, Selahattin Demirtaş, and the cultural activist and philanthropist, Osman Kavala, and we note that the criticisms the court made of the case against Demirtaş, which they regarded as politically motivated and unsubstantiated, are relevant to all HDP defendants who face possible life imprisonment in the ongoing 'Kobanê Case', who are accused of the same charges.

We call for Turkey to end its attacks and pressures on opposition parties, which have especially impacted the HDP but have also restricted the actions of municipalities run by the Republican People's Party (CHP).

We condemn Turkey's intensive harassment and frequent detention of critics of government and defenders of human rights. We call for this to be stopped, and for those detained to be released with charges dropped.

In light of all of the above:

We declare our unequivocal solidarity with the HDP's relentless struggle in Turkey for peace, democracy, and justice.

We agree to closely monitor the politically motivated judicial repression on the HDP and on broader democratic society in Turkey.

We invite all members of the Progressive Alliance to further strengthen their solidarity with the HDP, as it faces increasingly challenging times.

We further agree to push for any agreements on improved relations with Turkey to be contingent on improvements in human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.