



Erdogan's Hostage Diplomacy

Western Nationals in Turkish Prisons

Aykan Erdemir & Eric Edelman

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Introduction

At least two American citizens are currently sitting in Turkish prisons, where they have been held for the last two years.¹ One is Andrew Brunson, a pastor from North Carolina who ministered to a small Protestant congregation in Turkey for over 20 years until his arrest by the authorities in the fall of 2016. The other is Serkan Golge, a Turkish-American physicist who worked for NASA's Mars program until the Turkish police picked him up while on vacation in Turkey, also in 2016. Both men stand accused of plotting or partaking in a failed coup attempt that transpired that July against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has ruled the country for 15 years – increasingly with an iron fist.

Turkish prosecutors charged both U.S. citizens with “membership in a terrorist organization.” Golge received a seven-and-a-half-year prison sentence in February 2018 for his involvement with the Fethullahist Terrorist Organization (FETO), a group Turkey designated and accused of planning the July 2016 putsch. The term “FETO” was first used in 2015 to refer to the followers of U.S.-based Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen, Erdogan's closest political ally between 2002 and 2013, who later turned into his sworn enemy following the Gulen network's role in exposing and publicizing the massive corruption scandal that threatened Erdogan's government in December 2013. Prosecutors have charged Brunson not only with membership in FETO, but also in a group that is one of Gulen's archrivals, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a Marxist Kurdish insurgency group seeking self-rule in Turkey.

Ankara sees both groups as top national security threats, and has repeatedly branded and jailed dissidents across the political spectrum by accusing them of membership in these organizations. The two Americans are among some 100,000 people

detained in Turkey after Erdogan declared a “state of emergency” following the failed coup. Since then, the Turkish president has ruled the country by decree. By the end of the summer of 2016, 150,000 people were dismissed from their jobs. Blatantly targeting Turkey's secular and liberal opposition alongside the supposed coup-suspects, the dismissals amounted to no less than a mass political purge.²

Brunson and Golge were not the only foreign nationals ensnared in these purges. Not only did authorities begin to target Western human rights advocates – an attempt to intimidate Turkish dissidents who collaborate with foreign colleagues – but Turkey's pro-government media also launched a slander campaign against Europeans and Americans, accusing them of supporting terrorism and conspiring coups to make them into targets for the mass crackdown. With Gulen's residence in the United States and Washington's partnership with Syrian Kurds fueling state-propagated anti-Americanism throughout Turkey, Americans came under particular scrutiny.

But other Western nationals experienced similar pressures. More than 30 Western nationals have been jailed in Turkey following the coup attempt, and at least nine remain in prison as of June 1, 2018.³ Under the state of emergency, they could be legally held up to seven years in pre-trial detention, with limited access to legal or consular support, and are not entitled to attorney-client privilege. Pastor Brunson, for one, has had no due process in his case, with authorities even withholding his indictment for 17 months – based on the testimony of secret witnesses – and keeping him in a maximum-security prison. His lawyer claims he has lost 50 pounds since his arrest.

Increasingly, another aspect of these mass arrests has emerged: Since last summer, American and European officials have on several occasions condemned Turkey's “hostage diplomacy” – efforts by the Turkish

1. The authors believe more than a dozen Americans are in jail in Turkey, based on private discussions with U.S. officials.

2. For details on how Erdogan took control over Turkey's judiciary and law enforcement, and implications for rule of law in Turkey, see report: “Turkey: the Judicial System in Peril,” *International Commission of Jurists*, 2016. (<https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Turkey-Judiciary-in-Peril-Publications-Reports-Fact-Findings-Mission-Reports-2016-ENG.pdf>)

3. See Appendix.

government to make political bargaining chips out of Western prisoners arrested in Turkey since the coup.⁴ Following the arbitrary detention of Western nationals in Turkey, they argue, the government uses the prisoners as pawns to extract concessions in bilateral relations with the U.S. and EU countries. As one Freedom House analyst observed, "Turkey's new foreign policy is hostage-taking."⁵ Indeed, as President Erdogan turned increasingly autocratic at home, Turkey's international reputation and relations with its traditional transatlantic partners have also frayed.

This hostage diplomacy is not only hurting Turkey's global standing, but also propelling its transatlantic partners to consider sanctions against Ankara. Germany and the United States have issued several travel warnings to their citizens, advising against visiting Turkey. Business communities and investors across Europe fear Turkey's repressive climate and lack of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Turkey's relations with the Netherlands unraveled in March 2017, after a diplomatic row ahead of the Dutch elections. While the main reason for the breakdown was Erdogan's incitement of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, the deportations and detentions of dozens of Dutch citizens in Turkey did not help.

The harshest denunciations of Ankara's hostage diplomacy, however, have come from the United States Congress, where members have issued multiple calls for imposing sanctions against Turkish officials involved in the wrongful arrests of American citizens. The arrest of Brunson on dubious charges, in particular, has animated Washington, where Congress has held numerous panels and hearings on the pastor's Kafkaesque case and the conditions of his confinement. Meanwhile, authorities have arrested at least three Turkish employees of U.S.

consular missions in Turkey, prompting a visa crisis between the NATO allies in late October 2017. While the crisis was ostensibly resolved by December the same year, all three employees remain in prison or under house arrest.

The United States and various European Union countries have so far dealt with Erdogan's hostage diplomacy at the bilateral level, using discreet talks with Ankara to plead for the release of their nationals and employees. The Turkish president has chosen to bargain with each country according to his calendar, using his hostages as leverage to gain concessions. The U.S. and the EU need a coherent, transatlantic strategy to counter Erdogan's hostage diplomacy, not only to ensure the release of Western nationals in prison, but also to prevent other incidents in the future.

American Prisoners in Turkey

On October 7, 2016, U.S. nationals Pastor Andrew Brunson and his wife Norine Brunson were summoned by a local police station in the western Turkish province of Izmir to discuss their applications for a residence permit renewal.⁶ The couple had been living in Turkey for more than 20 years. The pastor, a member of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, had been working at the Izmir Resurrection Church. After being kept at the center for 13 days, in isolation and without access to an attorney or consular services, Turkish authorities formally detained the pastor.⁷ While his wife was released without any explanation, Brunson was transferred to a high-security migration management center in Izmir.

4. Mitch Prothero, "Turkey Is Engaging In Hostage Diplomacy With The US, Officials Say," *BuzzFeed*, August 18, 2017. (<https://www.buzzfeed.com/mitchprothero/turkey-is-engaging-in-hostage-diplomacy-with-the-us>)

5. Nate Schenkkan, "Turkey's New Foreign Policy is Hostage-Taking," *Foreign Policy*, March 2, 2018. (<http://foreignpolicy.com/2018/03/02/turkeys-new-foreign-policy-is-hostage-taking/>)

6. "Brunson Update," *World Witness*, October 26, 2016. (<http://worldwitness.org/brunson-update/>)

7. Anugrah Kumar, "US Pastor Andrew Brunson Faces New Charges of Attempting to Overthrow Turkish Gov't," *The Christian Post*, August 27, 2017. (<https://www.christianpost.com/news/us-pastor-andrew-brunson-faces-new-charges-attempting-overthrow-turkish-government-196941/>)

The legal process followed for Brunson's case is testament to the pitfalls of Turkey's "state of emergency" provisions, which bestow upon the authorities broad powers to carry out arbitrary police searches and detentions. Brunson did not appear before a judge for nearly two months after his detention. Until then, he was held in solitary confinement and repeatedly denied U.S. consular services, or even any legal counsel.⁸ Finally, on December 9, a judge formally accused Brunson of "membership in an armed terrorist organization," and the pastor was transferred to Izmir's maximum-security prison.⁹ The hearing marked the first time Brunson met with a lawyer.

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Under the state of emergency, Brunson can be subjected to pre-trial detention of up to seven years, with no access to his case files and no attorney-client privileges. The evidence, the court said, rested on the testimony of secret witnesses, with no possibility of an effective cross-examination by Brunson's lawyer.

The exact charges against Brunson, meanwhile, remain imprecise and multi-faceted. He appears to be accused of both inciting Turkey's Kurdish citizens against the state and of plotting the July 2016 coup with the Gulen network – a faction historically opposed to Kurdish political movements.

In May 2017, the Turkish daily *Hurriyet* reported that the pastor was charged with delivering religious sermons to Kurdish citizens "with a special purpose." In his defense, Brunson stated that he did not speak Kurdish and that he delivered sermons to all kinds of people, including Kurds.¹⁰ In August, however, fresh charges were added to the Brunson case, accusing the pastor of "gathering state secrets for espionage, attempting to overthrow the Turkish parliament and government, and to change the constitutional order" – a clear reference to the July coup attempt.

While prosecutors only released Brunson's indictment to the pastor's lawyers in March 2018, just weeks before Brunson's first court hearing, Turkey's pro-government media had published myriad stories throughout 2017 speculating on Brunson's possible offenses against the Turkish state and his alleged links to the Gulenist network.¹¹ These reports offered little evidence, instead systematically promoted a conspiratorial smear campaign against the pastor, portraying him as an agent of broader conspiracies attributed to the United States.

The Turkish daily *Takvim* – owned by the Turkuvaz media company,¹² which includes President Erdogan's son-in-law and his son-in-law's brother as board

8. "Brunson Update," *World Witness*, October 26, 2016. (<http://worldwitness.org/brunson-update/>); Aykan Erdemir, "Turkey's Latest Scapegoats: Christians," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, November 18, 2016. (<http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/dr-aykan-erdemir-turkeys-latest-scapegoats-christians/>)

9. Barbara G. Baker, "Turkey jails US pastor on 'terrorism' allegations," *World Watch Monitor*, December 9, 2016. (<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/12/update-turkey-jails-us-pastor-on-terrorism-allegations/>)

10. İsmail Saymaz, "US pastor jailed in Turkey accused of special sermons to Kurds, contact with Gülen movement," *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), May 18, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/us-pastor-jailed-in-turkey-accused-of-special-sermons-to-kurds-contact-with-gulen-movement-113247>)

11. Barbara G. Baker, "On trial for terrorism and espionage in a Turkish court," *World Watch Monitor*, April 25, 2018. (<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/04/on-trial-for-terrorism-and-espionage-in-a-turkish-court/>)

12. "Kalyon Group," *Media Ownership Monitor Turkey*, accessed March 6, 2018. (<https://turkey.mom-rsf.org/en/owners/companies/detail/company//kalyon-group/>)

members¹³ – claimed in a May 2017 article that Brunson is a CIA agent and was personally involved in the July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, adding that he would have been made director of the CIA if the coup had succeeded.¹⁴ The same month, Turkey's largest pro-government daily, *Sabah*, also owned by Turkuvaz, reported that an anonymous witness claimed the pastor's church was engaged in efforts to incorporate Kurds into Christianity as the "thirteenth lost tribe."¹⁵ In September, following an unsuccessful bomb attack against a shuttle bus carrying prison guards to the prison where Brunson is being held, *Takvim* published a story titled "The Pastor's Bomb," referring to the pastor as a "CIA agent," and implying that the attack was "a message from the CIA."¹⁶

Brunson was actually the second American to be jailed after the coup attempt. The first was a Turkish-American dual citizen, Serkan Golge, who was a physicist studying the effects of radiation for NASA's Mars program at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas. While on summer vacation with his family in southern Turkey, Golge was detained in August 2016, only weeks after the coup attempt. Like Brunson, he was accused of membership in a terrorist organization, as well as espionage.¹⁷ The only evidence the court produced against him was a \$1 bill found in Golge's

parents' house. (Turkish authorities claim that Gulen handed out a specific series of \$1 bills to his followers to designate their rank within the movement.)¹⁸ In early February, Golge was tried and sentenced to a seven-and-a-half-year prison term. He continues to be held in a prison in the southern Turkish province of Hatay.¹⁹ Because Turkey treats detained dual citizens as Turkish citizens only, Golge was denied any U.S. consular access – a move the United States failed to dispute for months.

In August 2016, Turkish authorities also detained American academic Clyde Forsberg, who was teaching at Turkey's Karabuk University.²⁰ Forsberg was accused of "aiding and abetting terrorism," and providing assistance to the Gulen network. He was released after appearing in court five days after his detention. But Forsberg feared further action against him, citing the publication of his court appearance, along with his full name and citizenship, by local newspapers.²¹ He was immediately dismissed from the university upon his release, and he left Turkey shortly after.

Meanwhile, in October 2016, Ryan Keating, an American PhD student and aid worker, was detained as he was trying to enter Turkey and deported from the country. Keating, who had been living in Turkey for

13. "Yönetim Kurulu (Board of Directors)," *Turkuvaz Medya Yayın Hizmetleri*, accessed March 6, 2018. (<http://www.turkuvazmedyayayhiz.com/BilgiToplumuHizmetleri/yonetim-kurulu-1380525544>)

14. Amberin Zaman, "US pastor remains political hostage in Ankara," *Al-Monitor*, May 31, 2017. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170531205450/https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/05/pastor-turkey-jail-plea.html>); Mevlüt Yüksel, "15 Temmuz başarılı olsaydı CIA'nın başına geçecekti (If July 15 had been successful he would have been appointed to run the CIA)," *Takvim* (Turkey), May 20, 2017. (<http://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2017/05/20/15-temmuz-basari-olsaydi-cianin-basina-gececekti>)

15. Nazif Karaman, "FETÖ'cü papazın dosyası kabarık çıktı (Skeletons in Gulenist pastor's closet revealed)," *Sabah* (Turkey), July 19, 2017. (<http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2017/07/19/fetocu-papazin-dosyasi-kabarik-cikti>)

16. "'Pastör' bombası (The pastor's bomb)," *Takvim* (Turkey), September 1, 2017. (<https://www.takvim.com.tr/guncel/2017/09/01/pastor-bombasi>); Ece Toksabay, "Several wounded after blast hits bus in Turkey's Izmir," *Reuters*, August 31, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-blast/several-wounded-after-blast-hits-bus-in-turkeys-izmir-idUSKCN1BB0HU>)

17. Laura Bohn and Tugba Tekerek, "A NASA Scientist Has Been Imprisoned in Turkey for 8 Months," *The New York Times*, March 20, 2017. (<https://kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/2017/03/20/a-nasa-scientist-has-been-imprisoned-in-turkey-for-8-months/>)

18. Elena Becatoros, "Turkey: Dollar bills seen as evidence of coup-plotter links," *Associated Press*, August 5, 2016. (<https://apnews.com/039b0df1be854a3fbfcfb30a244d1b5>)

19. "Update on Serkan Golge, NASA Scientist Arrested Following Attempted Coup in Turkey," *Committee of Concerned Scientists*, October 26, 2016. (<http://concernedscientists.org/2016/10/update-on-serkan-golge-nasa-scientist-arrested-following-attempted-coup-in-turkey/>)

20. Elizabeth Redden, "Detained in Turkey," *Inside Higher Ed*, August 31, 2016. (<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/08/31/foreign-academic-briefly-detained-turkey-tells-his-story>)

21. Ibid.

more than two decades, had set up a relief organization in partnership with the Kurtulus Church in Ankara, one of Turkey's largest evangelical churches, to support refugees in the Turkish capital.²² Keating was labeled "a threat to national security" and banned from entering Turkey.²³ Other Protestants, such as Patrick Jansen, a church leader who had been based in Gaziantep, were barred from the country.²⁴

“Turkey’s main opposition challenged the cases against these Americans at the Turkish parliament on multiple occasions... The government never issued a response.”

Turkey's main opposition challenged the cases against these Americans at the Turkish parliament on multiple occasions. On November 4, 2016, Selina Dogan, an Istanbul deputy from the Republican People's Party (CHP), submitted a parliamentary question regarding the deportations of Keating and Jansen, and the ongoing detainment of Andrew Brunson, then-awaiting deportation. The question referred to claims that the individuals were deported solely for being American citizens, as a response to the U.S.'s refusal to extradite Gulen to Turkey. Dogan asked the minister of interior exactly how many foreign clergymen had been deported since the attempted coup, and questioned whether they threatened national security. The government never issued a response.²⁵

Four days later, on November 8, CHP Izmir Deputy Zeynep Altioek also submitted a parliamentary question about the charges against Brunson, the validity of the evidence, the identities of the officials preventing Brunson from seeing his attorney, and more. Altioek pointed to the claim that more than 100 Protestant clergymen had been deported from Turkey since 2012, asking the minister of interior whether the Protestants were being systematically targeted. The government, once again, never responded.²⁶

All four Americans – the pastor, the physicist, the academic, and the aid worker – were ultimately accused of threatening national security. But Ankara's post-coup purges also targeted Turkish workers of U.S. consular missions.

On February 23, 2017, Turkish counterterrorism police detained Hamza Ulucay, a Turkish employee of the U.S. Consulate in the southern province of Adana, home to the U.S.-Turkish Incirlik airbase used by the anti-Islamic State coalition for military operations in Syria. Ulucay had worked for the consulate as a translator for 36 years before his detention. Although he was initially released from custody on probation, he was detained for a second time on March 7, after a prosecutor objected to his release. A court later ordered his formal arrest on charges of "membership in a terrorist organization" after authorities found \$1 bills at his residence.²⁷

Metin Topuz, another Turkish citizen and employee of the U.S. diplomatic staff in Turkey, was detained on October 4, 2017. Topuz, who worked for the U.S.

22. Barbara G. Baker, "US academic and refugee aid worker 'banned for life' from Turkey," *World Watch Monitor*, October 21, 2016.

(<https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/10/us-academic-and-refugee-aid-worker-banned-for-life-from-turkey/>)

23. Harry Farley, "I Was Kicked Out Of Turkey For Being A Christian," *Christian Today*, October 25, 2016. (<https://www.christiantoday.com/article/us.missionary.i.was.kicked.out.of.turkey.for.being.a.christian/98894.htm>)

24. Sibel Hurtas, "What state of emergency means for Turkey's Protestants," *Al-Monitor*, October 19, 2016. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170717170123/https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/en/originals/2016/10/turkey-state-of-emergency-for-protestants.html>)

25. Turkish Grand National Assembly, "İstanbul Milletvekili Selina Doğan Tarafından Yönetilen 7/9153 Esas Numaralı Soru Önergesi (Parliamentary Question Submitted by Istanbul Deputy Selina Doğan Numbered 7/9153)," November 4, 2017. (<http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d26/7/7-9153s.pdf>)

26. Turkish Grand National Assembly, "İzmir Milletvekili Zeynep Altioek Tarafından Yönetilen 7/9158 Esas Numaralı Soru Önergesi (Parliamentary Question Submitted by Izmir Deputy Zeynep Altioek Numbered 7/9158)," November 8, 2017. (<http://www2.tbmm.gov.tr/d26/7/7-9158s.pdf>)

27. "US consulate employee in Turkey's Adana arrested over PKK links," *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), March 7, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-consulate-employee-in-turkeys-adana-arrested-over-pkk-links-110524>)

Consulate General in Istanbul, was accused of espionage and working to destroy Turkey's constitutional order, another reference to the coup attempt. He was accused of being a Gulenist due to his alleged contact with a former Turkish prosecutor and former police chiefs with links to the U.S.-based cleric.²⁸ Washington issued a statement noting that Topuz was a liaison for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and had contacted many Turkish officials over the years as part of his duties.²⁹

Turkish authorities targeted a third consular employee, Mete Canturk, only days after the arrest of Topuz. After raiding Canturk's Istanbul home, the police visited Canturk's wife in her family's residence in the province of Amasya, detaining her and the couple's daughter, both accused of membership in the Gulen network. After being detained for more than a week, the two were released ahead of a State Department delegation visit to Turkey.³⁰

At this point, Washington appeared to be losing patience with Ankara. Within four days of Metin Topuz's

arrest, on October 8, U.S. authorities suspended all nonimmigrant visa services at its diplomatic facilities in Turkey.³¹ The next day, Ambassador John Bass – whose service in Turkey was coming to an end – issued a press release, stating that Topuz's arrest had “raised questions” about “whether the goal of some [Turkish] officials is to disrupt the long-standing cooperation between Turkey and the United States,” adding that U.S. officials were “not sure” whether the detentions were isolated incidents. Bass condemned the so-called “leaks” from Turkish officials to pro-government media outlets regarding allegations against Topuz as “disturbing,” echoing the consulate's statement that called the leaks an “attempt to try Topuz in the media rather than a court of law.”³²

The Turkish embassy in Washington soon retaliated by suspending its own visa services for American citizens.³³ At home, Erdogan made every effort to pin the blame for the visa crisis on the outgoing ambassador.³⁴ Erdogan publicly urged Washington to recall Bass, declaring that Ankara no longer considered him a legitimate

28. “US consulate staff making phone calls with FETÖ-linked figures arrested for espionage,” *Daily Sabah* (Turkey), October 4, 2017. (<https://www.dailysabah.com/investigations/2017/10/04/us-consulate-staff-making-phone-calls-with-feto-linked-figures-arrested-for-espionage>)

29. Amberin Zaman, “Erdogan targets US envoy over escalating visa row,” *Al-Monitor*, October 10, 2017. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171010221417/https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/10/erdogan-blames-us-ambassador-john-bass-tensions-turkey.html>)

30. Carlotta Gall, “U.S.-Turkey Visa Standoff Disrupts Business and Tourism,” *The New York Times*, October 20, 2017. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/20/world/europe/us-turkey-visa-suspension.html>)

31. “U.S. Suspends Visa Services in Turkey, and Turkey Responds in Kind,” *Associated Press*, October 8, 2017. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/08/world/europe/us-turkey-visas.html>); Damla Güler, “Konsolosluk çalışınının kızı ve eşi için karar çıktı (Decision made for consular worker's daughter and wife),” *Hürriyet* (Turkey), October 16, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/konsolosluk-calisaninin-kizi-ve-esi-savciliga-sevk-edildi-40612530>)

32. U.S. Embassies and Consulates in Turkey, Press Release, “Ambassador John Bass' Statement On The Suspension Of Visa Services In Turkey,” October 9, 2017. (<https://tr.usembassy.gov/ambassador-john-bass-statement-suspension-visa-services-turkey/>); “US slams arrest of Istanbul consulate employee,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), October 5, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-slams-arrest-of-istanbul-consulate-employee-120396>)

33. Amy La Porte, “United States and Turkey mutually suspend visa services,” *CNN*, October 9, 2017. (<http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/08/world/us-turkey-halt-visa-service/index.html>); Turkish Embassy in Washington, DC, Press Release, “Statement From The Turkish Mission To The United States,” October 8 2017. (<http://washington.emb.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/ShowAnnouncement/336037>)

34. Amberin Zaman, “Erdogan targets US envoy over escalating visa row,” *Al-Monitor*, October 10, 2017. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20171010221417/https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/10/erdogan-blames-us-ambassador-john-bass-tensions-turkey.html>)

envoy.³⁵ The State Department, however, dismissed all such allegations, stating that Bass's decision had been made with the full coordination of Foggy Bottom, the White House, and the National Security Council.

On October 16, a U.S. delegation, chaired by Assistant Secretary of State Jonathan Cohen, travelled to Ankara to resolve the crisis.³⁶ Following a meeting at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkey said that the talks were going in a "good direction."³⁷

Weeks later, on November 6, the United States declared its partial resumption of visa services in Turkey, adding that it had obtained assurances from Ankara about the safety of U.S. consular staff at its missions.³⁸ Turkey again matched the U.S. move and resumed visa services, but denied that any assurances were made, signaling that the crisis was far from over.

The next day, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim travelled to Washington to discuss a variety of issues, including the visa crisis and the release of the consulate employees.³⁹ But after working-level meetings failed to yield results, Yildirim's scheduled meeting with Vice President Mike Pence was pushed back by two days. The two sides

could not even produce matching statements after their meeting on November 9, with Yildirim calling the talks "very fruitful" and the White House emphasizing its "deep concern" over the arrests in Turkey.⁴⁰

The crisis ultimately came to a "resolution" on December 28. While Ulucay and Topuz remain behind bars (and Canturk remains under house arrest), both countries announced a full resumption of visa services. Washington noted that the Turkish government had adhered to "assurances" given earlier, adding that there were no additional embassy employees under investigation, that local staff "would not be detained or arrested for performing their official duties," and that Turkish authorities had agreed to inform the U.S. if they intended to detain or arrest any members of the American missions in Turkey.⁴¹

The Turkish Embassy in Washington, however, again denied any "assurances concerning the ongoing judicial processes," adding that foreign mission personnel were not investigated for performing their official duties. "It is inappropriate to misinform the Turkish and American public that such assurances were provided," the statement read.⁴² As if to underscore this, in January

35. "US should recall envoy if he's behind visa crisis, Erdoğan says," *Daily Sabah* (Turkey), October 10, 2017. (<https://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2017/10/10/us-should-recall-envoy-if-hes-behind-visa-crisis-erdogan-says>); Ercan Gurses, "Turkey's Erdogan blames U.S. envoy for diplomatic crisis," *Reuters*, October 10, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-security/turkeys-erdogan-blames-u-s-envoy-for-diplomatic-crisis-idUSKBN1CF0XR>)

36. Sevil Erkuş, "US delegation to discuss visa crisis, Syria, security with Turkish officials," *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), October 16, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/us-delegation-to-discuss-visa-crisis-syria-security-with-turkish-officials-120949>)

37. "Turkey's talks with U.S. on visa crisis going in 'good direction', Erdoğan spokesman says," *Reuters*, October 18, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-security-erdogan/turkeys-talks-with-u-s-on-visa-crisis-going-in-good-direction-erdogan-spokesman-says-idUSKBN1CN1MS>)

38. Ece Toksabay, "U.S., Turkey restart issuing visas but tensions over detentions fester," *Reuters*, November 6, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-visa/u-s-turkey-restart-issuing-visas-but-tensions-over-detentions-fester-idUSKBN1D61VQ>)

39. Murat Yetkin, "Key meeting on Turkey-US tension postponed to Nov 9," *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), November 7, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/key-meeting-on-turkey-us-tension-postponed-122052>)

40. Murat Yetkin, "Turkey, US pledge to improve ties in Yildirim, Pence meeting," *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), November 9, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-us-pledge-to-improve-ties-in-yildirim-pence-meeting-122225>); The White House, Office of the Vice President, Press Release, "Readout of the Vice President's Meeting with Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim," November 9, 2017. (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/11/09/readout-vice-presidents-meeting-turkish-prime-minister-binali-yildirim>)

41. U.S. Department of State, Press Release, "Full Resumption of U.S. Visa Services in Turkey," December 28, 2017. (<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/12/276772.htm>)

42. Turkish Embassy in Washington, DC, Press Release, "Statement From the Embassy of Turkey in Washington, DC," December 28, 2017. (<http://vasington.be.mfa.gov.tr/Mission/ShowAnnouncement/338151>)

2018, U.S. consulate employee Canturk was asked not to leave his house as part of an “effective house arrest.”⁴³

“Brunson has been given no due process, she argued, adding that the pastor was convinced that even if he were tried, the court proceedings would be a sham. Jolley described Erdogan’s statements suggesting a trade between the pastor and Gulen as explicitly revealing the Turkish president’s intentions in holding Brunson hostage.”

Meanwhile, in a November congressional hearing in Washington, Brunson’s American attorney CeCe Heil described Brunson’s condition to U.S. legislators. The pastor was unable to sleep and had lost over 50 pounds due to stress, Heil said. They still had no access to evidence since his file was sealed, she explained, adding that they had learned of an alleged secret witness whose testimony provided the basis for the charges. If Turkey had any evidence against him, she asserted, they would have revealed it and charged him by now.⁴⁴ In a Senate briefing on November 14, Sandra Jolley, the vice chair of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), described her recent visit to Brunson and the conditions of his confinement. Brunson has been given no due process, she argued, adding that the pastor was convinced that even if he were tried, the court proceedings would be a sham. Jolley described Erdogan’s statements suggesting a trade between the pastor and Gulen as explicitly revealing the Turkish president’s intentions in holding Brunson hostage.⁴⁵

EU Nationals in Turkish Prisons or Unable to Leave the Country

The foreign nationals targeted by the Turkish government’s post-coup mass arrests are not limited to American citizens. More than 20 European nationals have also been imprisoned since the failed coup. Due to the large Turkish immigrant community in Germany, many of the targets are German citizens of Turkish background, eliciting a harsh response from Berlin. But Dutch, Finnish, French, Greek, and Swedish citizens, among others, have also fallen victim to Ankara’s repression, facilitated by Erdogan’s ongoing state of emergency.

The first post-coup arrest of a European national came in November 2016, a month after Pastor Brunson’s arrest. That month, authorities detained French journalist Olivier Bertrand in Gaziantep and held him behind bars without charge for two days. Turkey’s semi-official *Anadolu Agency* reported that Bertrand was detained for working without proper accreditation, adding that he had written “favorable” articles about the perpetrators of the failed July 2016 coup attempt.⁴⁶

European officials may have viewed Bertrand’s arrest as an isolated arrest at the time, but in 2017, the picture changed dramatically. Turkish police detained German journalist Deniz Yucel on February 14, 2017. They officially arrested him two weeks later for spreading terrorist propaganda and inciting hatred. The only evidence the authorities cited were his published articles

43. Amberin Zaman, “Turkey resumes pressure on US Consulate staff,” *Al-Monitor*, February 1, 2018. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180201201500/https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/02/turkish-police-interrogate-another-us-embassy-worker.html>)

44. “Prisoners of the Purge: The Victims of Turkey’s Failing Rule of Law,” *Hearing before Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission*, November 15, 2017. (<https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/prisoners-purge>)

45. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Senate Briefing, “Turkey Today: Taking the Temperature of Religious Freedom and Human Rights,” November 14, 2017. (<http://www.uscirf.gov/uscirf-events/senate-briefing-turkey-today-taking-the-temperature-religious-freedom-and-human-rights>)

46. “French reporter detained in Turkey expelled,” *Agence France-Presse* (France), November 14, 2017. (<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/french-reporter-detained-in-turkey-expelled-106087>)

and interviews.⁴⁷ He was put in solitary confinement and remained there until his release one year later, on February 16, 2018.⁴⁸

Yücel, the Turkey correspondent for the German daily *Die Welt*, had earlier reported on the leaked emails of Turkey's Energy Minister Berat Albayrak, who also happens to be President Erdogan's son-in-law.⁴⁹ Yücel was originally detained as part of Ankara's crackdown on social media. But prosecutors also claimed that Yücel's interview with a leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a designated terrorist organization in Turkey, was evidence of incitement.⁵⁰

German Chancellor Angela Merkel soon came out in Yücel's defense, urging the Turkish government to respect the rule of law and follow due process.⁵¹ Erdogan quickly shot back, calling Yücel a "PKK representative," as well as a German "spy" who had been "in hiding" in the German consulate.⁵²

In April, Turkey arrested another German journalist, Mesale Tolu. One month later, prosecutors charged her with membership in a terrorist organization and with issuing terrorist propaganda. Authorities cited Tolu's

membership in the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP) – a legal political party accused of having ties to the outlawed Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP)⁵³ – arguing that she had attended funerals and memorial services of party members. Authorities also noted her attendance at anti-government protests after a massive corruption scandal was exposed in December 2013, as well as publications on Marxist-Leninist theory that the police seized in her apartment.⁵⁴

Tolu appeared in front of a judge for the first time in October 2017.⁵⁵ In November, Tolu's two attorneys were also detained, with both accused of membership in a terrorist group.⁵⁶ The two lawyers were taken to the Bakirkoy Women's Prison in Istanbul, where Tolu was also being held.

On December 18, Tolu was released pending trial after eight months in prison, but she was prohibited from leaving Turkey. Germany, which had earlier called for Tolu's unconditional release, stated that the release "in no way" marked an end to Tolu's case.⁵⁷ A month after her release, Tolu's husband and fellow journalist Suat Corlu was arrested along with at least four other

47. Dilek Mayaturk Yücel, "Inside and outside: On the 100th day of Deniz Yücel's imprisonment," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), May 24, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/inside-and-outside-on-the-100th-day-of-deniz-yucels-imprisonment/a-38961794>)

48. "Deniz Yücel 200 gündür özgürlüğünden yoksun (Deniz Yücel deprived of his freedom for 200 days)," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), September 1, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/tr/deniz-yücel-200-gündür-özgürlüğünden-yoksun/a-40318661>)

49. "German journalist Deniz Yücel taken into custody in Turkey," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), February 2, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/german-journalist-deniz-yücel-taken-into-custody-in-turkey/a-37603823>)

50. "Deniz Yücel 200 gündür özgürlüğünden yoksun (Deniz Yücel deprived of his freedom for 200 days)," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), September 1, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/tr/deniz-yücel-200-gündür-özgürlüğünden-yoksun/a-40318661>)

51. "Merkel slams 'bitter' detention of German journalist in Turkey," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), February 28, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-slams-bitter-detention-of-german-journalist-in-turkey/a-37741593>)

52. "Erdogan: Die Welt muhabiri Deniz Yücel, PKK'nın temsilcisi olarak, Alman ajanı olarak konsoloslukta saklandı (Erdogan: Die Welt correspondent Deniz Yücel hid in the consulate as PKK representative and German spy)," *T24* (Turkey), March 3, 2017. (<http://t24.com.tr/haber/erdogan-die-welt-muhabiri-deniz-yucel-pkknin-temsilcisi-olarak-alman-ajani-olarak-konsoloslukta-saklandi,391920>)

53. "HDP'nin masasından STAR'a 2. tehdit (Second threat from HDP pawn to STAR)," *Sabah* (Turkey), July 31, 2015. (<https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2015/07/31/hdpnin-masasindan-stara-2tehdit>)

54. Aram Ekin Duran, "Turkey's prosecution of German journalist Mesale Tolu 'unlawful,'" *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), October 11, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/turkeys-prosecution-of-german-journalist-mesale-tolu-unlawful/a-40899888>)

55. "Meşale Tolu hakim karşısına çıktı (Mesale Tolu brought in front of a judge)," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), October 10, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/tr/meşale-tolu-hakim-karşısına-çıktı/a-40899147>)

56. "Zwei Anwältinnen von Mesale Tolu verhaftet (Two lawyers for Mesale Tolu arrested)," *Bayerischer Rundfunk* (Germany), November 3, 2017. (<https://www.br.de/nachrichten/schwaben/inhalt/zwei-anwaeltinnen-von-mesale-tolu-verhaftet-100.html>)

57. "Turkey: German journalist Mesale Tolu released pending trial," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), October 18, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/turkey-german-journalist-mesale-tolu-released-pending-trial/a-41841231>)

members of the ESP and the Federation of Socialist Youth Associations (SGDF). Corlu had also been detained earlier and released in November 2017.⁵⁸

Turkish authorities also arrested German pilgrim David Britsch on his way to Jerusalem while trying to cross into Syria.⁵⁹ Despite his deportation order, Britsch was held at the Erzurum Removal Center in eastern Turkey for nine months. He said authorities withheld legal aid and any information on charges against him. He speculated that his arrest was due to the tense relationship between Turkey and Germany.⁶⁰

Also in April, a Dutch Foreign Ministry spokesperson stated that dozens of Turkish-Dutch dual citizens, many of them linked to the Gulen movement, were being prevented from leaving Turkey. The media had earlier reported that as many as 100 Dutch citizens were unable to leave the country; the ministry spokesperson said that they did not have exact numbers, since the ministry only knew of those who had sought consular help.⁶¹

The next month, Turkey detained the Istanbul-based French photojournalist Mathias Depardon, who was working in the southeastern province of Batman on a long-term project for *National Geographic* regarding the ancient city of Hasankeyf there.⁶² After officials

stopped and searched Depardon's phone and found images on his Instagram account of photographs of members of the PKK or other nationalist Kurds, he was interrogated for 16 hours and taken to a detention center in Gaziantep. He was accused, though never formally charged, of disseminating propaganda for a terrorist organization. The evidence consisted of screenshots of images of the PKK from Depardon's social media pages, which the journalist had also published in French media outlets.⁶³

“Depardon was held in isolation for the first ten days of his detention, without access to a lawyer.”

Depardon was held in isolation for the first ten days of his detention, without access to a lawyer.⁶⁴ He was allowed to meet with a French embassy official only after he went on a hunger strike for six days.⁶⁵ It later emerged that a court had ordered Depardon's deportation three days after his detainment, but he was held in custody without charge for over a month.⁶⁶

In July 2017, authorities took Loup Bureau, a 27-year-old French journalism student, into custody on the Turkish-Iraqi border after he returned to Turkey from

58. “Turkey detains five activists, including husband of freed German journalist –party,” *Reuters*, January 18, 2018. (<https://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-germany-turkey/turkey-detains-five-activists-including-husband-of-freed-german-journalist-party-idUKKBN1F72UJ>)

59. “Tatilci Türk Türkiye’de gözaltına alındı (Turkish vacationer arrested in Turkey),” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), July 28, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/tr/tatilci-türk-türkiyede-gözaltına-alındı/a-39878789>)

60. “Another German, pilgrim David Britsch, released from Turkish jail,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), December 22, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/another-german-pilgrim-david-britsch-released-from-turkish-jail/a-41898333>)

61. “Crackdown hits Dutch dual citizens in Turkey,” *Reuters*, April 6, 2017. (<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-referendum-netherlands/crackdown-hits-dutch-dual-citizens-in-turkey-idUSKBN17821W>)

62. Daniel Stone, “Turkey Releases National Geographic Photographer Detained for a Month But Never Charged,” *National Geographic*, June 9, 2017. (<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/proof/2017/06/mathias-depardon-turkey-arrest/>)

63. Susanna D’Aliesio, “Mathias Depardon speaks, after a month held without charge in Turkey,” *British Journal of Photography* (UK), August 3, 2017. (<http://www.bjp-online.com/2017/08/mathias-depardon-speaks/>)

64. Ibid.

65. “French photographer Depardon freed after one-month detainment in Turkey,” *France 24* (France), June 10, 2017. (<http://www.france24.com/en/20170610-france-turkey-photographer-mathias-depardon-returns-paris-jail>)

66. Olivier Laurent, “French Photojournalist Detained in Turkey Is Freed,” *Time*, June 9, 2017. (<http://time.com/4812517/mathias-depardon-free/>); Susanna D’Aliesio, “Mathias Depardon speaks, after a month held without charge in Turkey,” *British Journal of Photography* (UK), August 3, 2017. (<http://www.bjp-online.com/2017/08/mathias-depardon-speaks/>)

Erbil.⁶⁷ Bureau was imprisoned in Sirnak after being charged with membership in the Syria-based Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), a PKK affiliate and therefore a terrorist organization in Turkish eyes. The evidence consisted of his photos and interviews with YPG fighters.

“German citizens of Turkish background have long been targeted by Turkey’s draconian anti-terrorism laws.”

Meanwhile Kadim D., a Turkish citizen who had been living in Germany for 40 years (and whose last name was left out of reports), was detained while on vacation in Turkey in July 2017. Unlike the others, Kadim D. was not accused of terrorism, but of insulting Erdogan. A screenshot of one his Facebook posts was presented as evidence. He was conditionally released after a day, and was banned from leaving Turkey until his trial, which could be scheduled for up to two years from detention.⁶⁸

The hunt against journalists and activists soon expanded to include human rights activists. German

Peter Steudtner and Swedish Ali Gharavi, the organizers of a digital security workshop in Istanbul on protecting the work of human rights defenders, were arrested on July 18, along with ten participants of the workshop, which included Amnesty International's Turkey director.⁶⁹ They were all accused of membership in a terrorist organization.⁷⁰ Pro-government media launched a systematic smear campaign, calling the prisoners foreign “agents,” and implying their involvement in the July 2016 coup attempt.⁷¹

Merkel came to Steudtner's defense, condemning his arrest and calling it “absolutely unjustified,” adding that the German government, at all levels, would work to secure his release. A Foreign Ministry statement read, “linking a fighter and spokesman for human rights and democracy like Peter Steudtner to supporters of terrorists is absurd.”⁷²

After more than 100 days in prison, Steudtner and Gharavi were both released on bail and returned to Germany in October 2017.⁷³ Their Turkish colleagues, including Amnesty International's Turkey director Taner Kilic, meanwhile, remain in jail as of June 1, 2018.⁷⁴

67. “French journalist Loup Bureau arrives home after being released from Turkish jail,” *France 24* (France), September 18, 2017. (<http://www.france24.com/en/20170917-french-journalist-loup-bureau-arrives-france-release-turkish-jail>); “Şırnak'ta tutuklu bulunan Fransız gazeteci Loup Bureau serbest bırakıldı (Loup Bureau, French journalist detained in Sirnak was released),” *BBC* (UK), September 15, 2017. (<http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-dunya-41278215>)

68. “Tatilci Türk Türkiye’de gözaltına alındı (Turkish vacationer arrested in Turkey),” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), July 28, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/tr/tatilci-turk-turkiyede-gozaltina-alindi/a-39878789>)

69. “Turkey: Free Rights Defenders Immediately,” *Human Rights Watch*, July 6, 2017. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/06/turkey-free-rights-defenders-immediately>); “Berlin condemns Turkey arrests of Peter Steudtner and further human rights activists,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), July 19, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/berlin-condemns-turkey-arrests-of-peter-steudtner-and-further-human-rights-activists/a-39729740>)

70. “Turkey: Free Rights Defenders Immediately,” *Human Rights Watch*, July 6, 2017. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/06/turkey-free-rights-defenders-immediately>)

71. “İstanbul’da ajan avı (Spy hunt in Istanbul),” *A Haber* (Turkey), July 6, 2017. (<https://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2017/07/06/istanbulda-ajan-avi-1499302442>); “Turkey: Free Rights Defenders Immediately,” *Human Rights Watch*, July 6, 2017. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/06/turkey-free-rights-defenders-immediately>)

72. “Berlin condemns Turkey arrests of Peter Steudtner and further human rights activists,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), July 19, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/berlin-condemns-turkey-arrests-of-peter-steudtner-and-further-human-rights-activists/a-39729740>)

73. “German activist Peter Steudtner returns from Turkey on bail,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), October 25, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/german-activist-peter-steudtner-returns-from-turkey-on-bail/a-41113789>)

74. “Demand justice for Taner Kılıç,” *Amnesty International*, accessed on May 3, 2018. (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/get-involved/take-action/free-the-rights-defenders-in-turkey/>)

Of course, German citizens of Turkish background have long been targeted by Turkey's draconian anti-terrorism laws. In early 2016, before the coup attempt, a Turkish court barred Sharo Garip, German sociologist of Kurdish descent, from leaving the country. Garip was accused of terror propaganda after he signed an appeal, along with more than 1,000 other academics, urging the Turkish government to end its human rights violations in the country's predominantly Kurdish southeast. After almost two years, an Istanbul court finally lifted the travel ban, and Garip was allowed to return to Germany that December. His trial is set to continue in 2018.⁷⁵

Since the failed coup, Turkish targeting of Turkish-German writers has even spilled beyond Turkey's borders. In August 2017, Spanish police arrested Dogan Akhanli, a German writer of Turkish origin on vacation in Granada, citing an extradition request filed by the Turkish government through Interpol. Akhanli had been jailed in Turkey for over two years following the military coup of 1980, due to his membership in Turkey's Revolutionary Communist Party.⁷⁶ Since then, he has written extensively on human rights and persecution of minorities in Turkey.⁷⁷ Akhanli's lawyer claimed that his client was targeted for "advocating the recognition of Turkey's mass killing of Armenians as genocide."⁷⁸

Akhanli gave up his Turkish citizenship for a German one in 2001. Since then, he has been a vocal critic of

President Erdogan. Akhanli was arrested again while on a trip in Istanbul in 2010, on charges dating back to a 1989 armed robbery case. He spent four months in prison before being acquitted and leaving for Germany. Three years later, he was sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment with no chance of appeal, and has not returned to Turkey since. Upon his arrest in Spain, the German foreign minister – who was visiting Spain after a terror attack in Barcelona – personally intervened, and Spanish authorities released Akhanli a day later.⁷⁹

Meanwhile, Spanish authorities carried out a second arrest in August 2017, acting on another Turkish request through Interpol of Turkish-Swedish writer Hamza Yalcin. Yalcin, a chief columnist for a socialist news website, was accused along with his colleagues of "insulting the president" and "denigrating the military," due to an article published on their website.⁸⁰ Held by Spanish authorities for 57 days, Yalcin was finally released in late September.⁸¹

In October, a Turkish court sentenced Ayla Albayrak, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, to more than two years in prison.⁸² Albayrak, who is a dual citizen of Turkey and Finland, was found guilty in absentia of promoting terrorist propaganda based on a 2015 article she had authored on Turkey's ongoing fight with the PKK in the country's southeast.⁸³ The Finnish foreign minister has reportedly shared his concerns about Albayrak's

75. "Turkey: Court lifts travel ban against German academic," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), December 19, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/turkey-court-lifts-travel-ban-against-german-academic/a-41859388>)

76. Melissa Eddy, "Germany Condemns Detention of Turkish-Born Writer in Spain," *The New York Times*, August 21, 2017. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/21/world/europe/turkey-germany-spain-writer-detained-erdogan.html>)

77. "Erdogan critic Dogan Akhanli arrested in Spain," *BBC* (UK), August 19, 2017. (<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-40990083>)

78. "Spain releases Dogan Akhanli, German author detained on Turkish warrant," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), August 20, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/spain-releases-dogan-akhanli-german-author-detained-on-turkish-warrant/a-40163753>)

79. Melissa Eddy, "Germany Condemns Detention of Turkish-Born Writer in Spain," *The New York Times*, August 21, 2017. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/21/world/europe/turkey-germany-spain-writer-detained-erdogan.html>)

80. *Ibid.*

81. Ciaran Giles, "Spain halts extradition of Turkish-Swedish reporter," *Associated Press*, September 29, 2017. (<https://apnews.com/cac62797f46947f7b70b2a5a9148643f/Spain-halts-extradition-of-Turkish-Swedish-reporter>)

82. Kareem Fahim, "Turkey sentences Wall Street Journal reporter to more than two years in prison," *The Washington Post*, October 10, 2017. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/turkey-sentences-wall-street-journal-reporter-to-more-than-two-years-in-prison/2017/10/10/74031b38-adf8-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html)

83. Ayla Albayrak, "Urban Warfare Escalates in Turkey's Kurdish-Majority Southeast," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 19, 2017. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/urban-warfare-escalates-in-turkeys-kurdish-majority-southeast-1440024103>)

case with Turkish authorities and stated that “Turkey’s stance on freedom of the press and speech is taking on disturbing features.”⁸⁴

Hostage Diplomacy

In the spring of 2017, a series of statements, reports, and actions by the Turkish government and its Western counterparts began to indicate that Turkey’s detentions of American and European citizens served a purpose beyond the harassment and intimidation of Erdogan’s foreign and domestic critics: They helped Ankara gain leverage in its dealings with Washington and European governments.

In April 2017, in the midst of a war of words with German Chancellor Merkel about the arrest of reporter Deniz Yucel, Erdogan vowed in a public speech that Yucel would not be released “as long as I remain in office,” citing the reason as Germany’s refusal to extradite suspected Turkish coup fugitives seeking asylum there.⁸⁵

That same month, an infamous Turkish prisoner in New York, the Iranian-born sanctions-buster Reza Zarrab, hired former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani and ex-U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey as his lawyers. The two attorneys told the court that they had met with Erdogan earlier in February – a meeting the duo described as part of their efforts to seek “a state-to-state resolution” to the sanctions-buster’s case, adding that “senior officials in both the U.S. and

Turkish governments remain receptive to pursuing the possibility of an agreement.”⁸⁶

In July 2017, the German daily *Bild* reported that Turkey had allegedly offered to release Turkish-German prisoner Deniz Yucel in exchange for Berlin’s extradition of two former Turkish generals who had fled to Germany after the failed coup, but that German officials had refused.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, the July 5 Turkish raid on human rights activists and Amnesty International, including Steudtner and Gharavi, came a day before high-level meetings in Ankara with the European Union enlargement commissioner, exacerbating suspicions about Turkish intentions behind the arrests.⁸⁸

On August 18, *BuzzFeed* published a report, citing European security officials accusing Turkish representatives of repeatedly linking the arrests of Americans and Europeans to the extradition of Turkish citizens sought by Ankara abroad – mostly ones accused of involvement in the 2016 coup attempt. The report cited European officials from different countries, including Germany and France. Critically, it quoted German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel responding to *BuzzFeed’s* question on why Deniz Yucel was still imprisoned without an indictment: “Turkey, in my opinion, holds him as a hostage.”⁸⁹

On August 25, Erdogan issued an emergency decree that authorized him to trade foreign detainees in

84. “Finnish foreign minister, press criticise Turkey after WSJ journalist’s jail sentence,” *Yle* (Finland), October 11, 2017. (https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/news/finnish_foreign_minister_press_critiscise_turkey_after_wsj_journalists_jail_sentence/9876964)

85. Cristina Burack, “Erdogan rules out releasing German-Turkish journalist Yucel ‘as long as I am in power,’” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), April 14, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/erdogan-rules-out-releasing-german-turkish-journalist-yucel-as-long-as-i-am-in-power/a-38424975>)

86. Benjamin Weiser and Patrick Kingsley, “Why Giuliani Held a Secret Meeting With Turkey’s Leader,” *The New York Times*, April 20, 2017. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/20/nyregion/rudy-giuliani-reza-zarrab-iran-sanctions-case.html>); See also: Merve Tahiroglu and Eric Edelman, “Why Turmp should not swap prisoners with Erdogan,” *The Washington Post*, July 7, 2017. (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/democracy-post/wp/2017/07/07/why-trump-should-not-swap-prisoners-with-erdogan/>)

87. “Deutschland erpresst und droht (Germany blackmailed and threatened),” *Bild* (Germany), July 20, 2017. (<http://www.bild.de/politik/ausland/recep-tayyip-erdogan/eskaliert-jetzt-die-tuerkei-krise-52602456.bild.html>)

88. “Turkey: Free Rights Defenders Immediately,” *Human Rights Watch*, July 6, 2017. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/07/06/turkey-free-rights-defenders-immediately>)

89. Mitch Prothero, “Turkey Is Engaging In Hostage Diplomacy With The US, Officials Say,” *BuzzFeed*, August 18, 2017. (<https://www.buzzfeed.com/mitchprothero/turkey-is-engaging-in-hostage-diplomacy-with-the-us>)

Turkey for Turkish citizens held abroad.⁹⁰ The decree, which followed the issuing of additional charges against jailed Pastor Andrew Brunson, signaled that Erdogan might be seeking to trade the American prisoner for the Turkish prisoner in New York, Zarrab, who possessed damaging information on how Erdogan's government executed a massive scheme to launder billions of dollars to Iran at the height of international sanctions targeting Tehran's nuclear program in 2012-2013.⁹¹

On September 28, 2017, Erdogan suggested swapping Pastor Brunson for the U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, whose extradition Ankara had been demanding from Washington for over a year since the coup attempt. In a televised speech, Erdogan linked the fates of the two men and said, "Give us the pastor back, they say. You have one pastor as well. Give him to us, then we will try [Brunson] and give him to you."⁹² The U.S. State Department promptly dismissed the possibility of such a deal.

Ankara's hostage diplomacy flared up in German politics in January 2018, with Germany's *Tagesschau* news service reporting a "dirty deal" between Berlin and Ankara – pointing to Foreign Minister Gabriel's invitation of his Turkish counterpart to Germany on January 6, only a day after Gabriel had made remarks connecting Yucel's potential release to the blocking of German arms exports to Turkey.⁹³ In September, Gabriel had explained the

German decision put a significant amount of defense exports to Turkey on hold due to Turkey's deteriorating human rights record and strained ties between Berlin and Ankara, adding boldly, "That will remain the case for as long as the Yucel matter remains unresolved."⁹⁴

The connection between Yucel's release and German arms exports to Turkey became increasingly clear. Within a week of the first reports, Yucel conducted a print media interview via his lawyers, rejecting any such "dirty deals" to be made on his behalf: He said that he did not want his release to be the result of "a more liberal German stance on arms exports to Turkey or a prisoner exchange."⁹⁵ Responding to Yucel's statement, Foreign Minister Gabriel said that he had never offered such a deal to Turkey, and that the normalization of relations between the two countries was unrelated to Yucel.

On January 25, Germany's caretaker government announced that it would put on hold any decision regarding the upgrading of German-made tanks in Turkey until a coalition deal was sealed to form a new government in Berlin – with Gabriel noting that the arms export issue would be an important topic of discussion in coalition negotiations.⁹⁶ The Turkish Foreign Ministry also emphasized that the decision was merely postponed, and that the move did not amount to halting defense industry cooperation.⁹⁷

90. "Olağanüstü Hal Kapsamında Bazı Düzenlemeler Yapılması Hakkında Kanun Hükmünde Kararname (Decree Having the Force of Law Concerning Certain Regulations within the Scope of the State of Emergency)," *Resmî Gazete* (Turkey), August 25, 2017. (<http://213.14.3.44/20170825/20170825-13.pdf>)

91. Aykan Erdemir, "Turkey Trumps Up the Charges against the Imprisoned U.S. Pastor," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, August 25, 2017. (<http://www.defenddemocracy.org/media-hit/dr-aykan-erdemir-turkey-trumps-up-the-charges-against-the-imprisoned-us-pastor/>)

92. "Turkey's Erdogan links fate of detained U.S. pastor to wanted cleric Gulen," *Reuters*, September 28, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey-cleric/turkeys-erdogan-links-fate-of-detained-u-s-pastor-to-wanted-cleric-gulen-idUSKCN1C31IK>)

93. Arnd Henze, "Einen schmutzigen Deal darf es nicht geben (There cannot be a dirty deal)," *Tagesschau* (Germany), January 6, 2018. (http://www.tagesschau.de/kommentar/cavusoglu-145-_origin-976319cf-fba7-48f4-8df5-69cacdd6482d.html)

94. Christiane Hoffman and Klaus Brinkbäumer, "We Are Seeing What Happens When the U.S. Pulls Back," *Spiegel* (Germany), January 8, 2018. (<http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/sigmar-gabriel-we-are-seeing-what-happens-when-the-u-s-pulls-back-a-1186181.html>); "Germany has put most arms exports to Turkey on hold: minister," *Reuters*, September 11, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey-arms-exports/germany-has-put-most-arms-exports-to-turkey-on-hold-minister-idUSKCN1BM2K1>)

95. "No 'dirty deals', says German journalist imprisoned in Turkey about his release," *Famagusta Gazette* (Cyprus), January 18, 2018. (<http://famagusta-gazette.com/no-dirty-deals-says-german-journalist-imprisoned-in-turkey-about-his-rel-p43213-69.htm>)

96. "Germany freezes any decision on tanks upgrade for Turkey," *Reuters*, January 25, 2018. (<https://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFKBN1FE1PR>)

97. "Turkey says no freeze on deal to upgrade German-made tanks," *Daily Sabah* (Turkey), January 25, 2018. (<https://www.dailysabah.com/defense/2018/01/25/turkey-says-no-freeze-on-deal-to-upgrade-german-made-tanks>)

Meanwhile, Erdogan repeated his calls for a prisoner swap with the United States. With the New York trial against Zarrab now over and the sanctions-buster cooperating with U.S. investigators against Ankara, Erdogan doubled down on his cleric-for-cleric rhetoric, announcing that Ankara would not extradite any suspects to the United States unless Washington handed over Gulen to Turkey. "If you're not giving him (Gulen) to us, then excuse us, but from now on whenever you ask us for another terrorist, as long as I am in office, you will not get them," he snarled.⁹⁸

“With the New York trial against Zarrab now over and the sanctions-buster cooperating with U.S. investigators against Ankara, Erdogan doubled down on his cleric-for-cleric rhetoric...”

On February 16, 2018, Deniz Yücel was finally freed – a day after Chancellor Merkel's meeting with Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım in Berlin. Gabriel's

first reaction to Yücel's release was to “assure” people that “there are no agreements, trade-offs, or deals in connection with this.”⁹⁹ For his part, the Turkish premier welcomed Yücel's release, describing it as marking the alleviation of tensions between Turkey and Germany.¹⁰⁰ Shortly after the statement, however, Germany's public international broadcaster *Deutsche Welle* published an expose showing that the private jet that took Yücel out of Turkey following his release had been rented on February 14, two days before the court decision, suggesting that the Turkish authorities notified their German counterparts of the court's verdict ahead of the actual hearing.¹⁰¹

On February 25, Czech authorities arrested Syrian Kurdish leader Salih Muslim. Ankara demanded the Kurdish leader's extradition to Turkey due to his role in the YPG.¹⁰² Czech media reported that Prague might extradite Muslim to secure the release of two Czech citizens convicted on terrorism charges in Turkey.¹⁰³ Prague, however, released Muslim on February 27, 2018.¹⁰⁴

On March 2, Turkey detained Angelos Mitretodis and Dimitris Kouklatzis, two Greek soldiers who

98. “Turkey to end extraditions to U.S. unless cleric is turned over, Erdogan says,” *Reuters*, January 11, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-turkey/turkey-to-end-extraditions-to-u-s-unless-cleric-is-turned-over-erdogan-says-idUSKBN1F01XV>)

99. “Turkey frees German-Turkish journalist, who flies to Berlin,” *Reuters*, February 16, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey-yucel/turkey-frees-german-turkish-journalist-who-flies-to-berlin-idUSKCN1G010E>)

100. “Başbakan Binali Yıldırım: Türkiye Almanya ilişkilerinde bazı sıkıntılar bugün giderilmiş görünüyor (Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım: Some troubles in the Turkey-Germany relationship appear to have been resolved),” *Cumhuriyet* (Turkey), February 16, 2018. (http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/dunya/927949/Basbakan_Binali_Yildirim_Turkiye_Almanya_iliskilerinde_bazi_sikintilar_bugun_giderilmis_gorunuyor.html)

101. “Deniz Yücel nasıl serbest kaldı? (How was Deniz Yücel released?),” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), February 20, 2018. (<http://www.dw.com/tr/deniz-yucel-nasil-serbest-kaldi/a-42666019>)

102. “Czech court to rule on custody for Kurdish leader wanted by Turkey,” *Reuters*, February 26, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-pyd-turkey/czech-court-to-rule-on-custody-for-kurdish-leader-wanted-by-turkey-idUSKCN1GA0R7>)

103. Marketa Vselichova and Miroslav Farkas were arrested in November 2016 and charged with membership in the YPG. They are currently serving their six-year prison term in Turkey. Daniela Lazarová, “Friend Of Czechs Arrested In Turkey: Their Main Goal Was To Establish A Field Hospital,” *Radio Praha* (Czech Republic), November 24, 2016. (<http://www.radio.cz/en/section/panorama/friend-of-czechs-arrested-in-turkey-their-main-goal-was-to-establish-a-field-hospital>); Martin Ehl, “Česko zadrželo na tureckou žádost vůdce Kurdů (The Czech Republic detained the Kurdish leader at the Turkish request),” *Aktuálně* (Czech Republic), February 25, 2018. (<https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/zahranici/policie-zadrzela-na-tureckou-zadost-vudce-kurdu-dosavadnich/r-f22ad68c1a1c11e8a72bac1f6b220ee8/>); Jan Velinger, “Turkish Court Sentences Czechs To More Than Six Years In Prison,” *Radio Praha* (Czech Republic), August 2, 2017. (<http://www.radio.cz/en/section/curaffrs/turkish-court-sentences-czechs-to-more-than-six-years-in-prison>)

104. “Czech court releases Syrian Kurdish leader wanted on Turkish warrant,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), February 27, 2018. (<http://m.dw.com/en/czech-court-releases-syrian-kurdish-leader-wanted-on-turkish-warrant/a-42756043>)

crossed the Turkish border.¹⁰⁵ Although the Greek army said the soldiers were “lost in bad weather,” Turkish courts charged them with espionage. As rumors surfaced the next day that the pair might be exchanged with eight Turkish soldiers seeking asylum in Greece, a Greek official called the claims “pure fantasy,” stating that the country would not “conduct an exchange of prisoners.”¹⁰⁶ Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias urged Ankara to “apply the provisions of international law and not turn a routine procedure into a major legal and political problem.”¹⁰⁷ On March 18, Greek media reported the Greek government’s fears that the two soldiers “could be used as a bargaining chip” to force Greece into extraditing Turkish asylum seekers.¹⁰⁸ Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras accused Turkey on April 3 of intensifying provocations and “escalating the situation on all fronts,” and urged the release of the soldiers as a goodwill gesture.¹⁰⁹ On April 7, he further added that “human life and human freedom are not, and should not be, pawns to power games and blackmail.”¹¹⁰

America and Europe Respond to Hostage Diplomacy

The U.S. Response

The United States’ responses to Erdogan’s hostage diplomacy appear to have failed to yield results: Pastor Andrew Brunson remains in jail awaiting conviction, and physicist Serkan Golge was just sentenced to seven-and-a-half years this February. All three Turkish consular workers of the U.S. Mission in Turkey continue to remain in custody or under house arrest.

Since coming to office in January 2017, the Trump administration has stepped up pressure on Turkey regarding Brunson’s case. During his visit to Turkey in March 2017, then-Secretary of State Rex Tillerson took time to meet with Pastor Brunson’s wife Norine Brunson.¹¹¹ Vice President Mike Pence sent her a letter in April, assuring her that the State Department and the White House “consider Andrew’s release and reunification with you and your three children extremely important.”¹¹² In May, in his first presidential meeting with Erdogan at the White House, President Trump “raised the incarceration of Pastor Andrew Brunson and asked that the Turkish Government

105. “Turkey arrests Greek soldiers on espionage charges,” *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), March 2, 2018. (<http://www.dw.com/en/turkey-arrests-greek-soldiers-on-espionage-charges/a-42804765>)

106. “Greece not planning exchange of two soldiers held in Turkey: Katrougalos,” *Hürriyet Daily News* (Turkey), March 3, 2018. (<http://www.hurriyetaidailynews.com/greece-not-planning-exchange-of-two-soldiers-held-in-turkey-greek-alternate-fm-katrougalos-128187>)

107. Helena Smith, “Turkey refuses to release Greek border guards in spy row,” *The Guardian* (UK), March 5, 2018. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/05/turkey-refuses-to-release-greek-border-guards-in-spy-row>)

108. Vassilis Nedos, “Greek ruling coalition fears lengthy Turkey crisis,” *Ekathimerini* (Greece), March 18, 2018. (<http://www.ekathimerini.com/226847/article/ekathimerini/news/greek-ruling-coalition-fears-lengthy-turkey-crisis>)

109. Michele Kambas, “Greek PM urges Turkey to release two soldiers as goodwill gesture,” *Reuters*, April 3, 2018. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-greece-turkey-tsipras/greek-pm-urges-turkey-to-release-two-soldiers-as-goodwill-gesture-idUSKCN1HA13F>)

110. “Greek PM hardens tone on soldiers jailed in Turkey,” *Agence France-Presse* (France), April 7, 2018. (<https://www.afp.com/en/news/826/greek-pm-hardens-tone-soldiers-jailed-turkey-doc-13s0zi1>)

111. “Tillerson meets wife of U.S. pastor jailed in Turkey,” *Reuters*, March 31, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-usa-pastor/tillerson-meets-wife-of-u-s-pastor-jailed-in-turkey-idUSKBN1720JY>)

112. “Wife of Imprisoned American Pastor Andrew Brunson Receives Personal Letter from Vice President Pence,” *ACLJ*, April 10, 2017. (<https://aclj.org/persecuted-church/wife-of-imprisoned-american-pastor-andrew-brunson-receives-personal-letter-from-vice-president-pence>)

expeditiously return him to the United States.”¹¹³ Reports suggest that Pence separately mentioned the pastor to the Turkish president during the visit. In August, meanwhile, Secretary Tillerson publicly called for Brunson's release, stating, “The United States continues to advocate for [Brunson's] release, who has been wrongfully imprisoned in Turkey.”¹¹⁴

Even with this flurry of activity, the administration's efforts have remained limited. Congress, on the other hand, has arguably been more active on the issue, especially regarding Brunson's arrest. Senator James Lankford (R-OK) took a special interest in Brunson's case, publishing several editorials calling attention to the pastor's arrest. As early as January 2017, Lankford called upon the Turkish government to treat properly and respect American citizens, as well as to respect religious freedom more broadly.¹¹⁵

“In February 2017, 78 U.S. senators and representatives issued a joint letter to Erdogan, urging the Turkish president to return the imprisoned pastor.”

The call appears to have galvanized colleagues. In February 2017, 78 U.S. senators and representatives issued a joint letter to Erdogan, urging the Turkish president to return the imprisoned pastor. Acknowledging the close relationship and long-time

strategic partnership between Turkey and the United States, the letter asked Erdogan to consider “how the recent treatment of Mr. Brunson places significant strain not only on him and his family, but also on the robust bilateral relationship between the United States and Turkey.”¹¹⁶

By fall, Erdogan's desire for a deal that would involve swapping Brunson for Gulen provoked the ire of Congress. Senator Lankford issued a press statement in September dismissing any prospects of a deal, warning that the president's suggestion “should not be taken seriously,” and that “Turkish officials responsible for the prolonged, unjust imprisonment of Dr. Andrew Brunson, or any American, should be denied the privilege of entry in the US.”¹¹⁷ He soon followed up by proposing, together with Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), to amend the Department of State's 2018 Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Act to identify and restrict entry into the U.S. for any Turkish officials knowingly responsible for the wrongful or unlawful prolonged detention of U.S. citizens. The proposal was accepted.¹¹⁸ Senators Lankford and Shaheen pulled the sanctions language from the omnibus spending bill of March 2018 to give “the State Department's newly established dialogue with Turkey more time to succeed.”¹¹⁹ Both senators, however, have indicated that the sanctions language may very well be included in legislation later this year if Brunson is not released.

113. “Trump presses Turkey's Erdogan to release jailed US pastor,” *CNN*, May 17, 2017. (<https://www.cnn.com/2017/05/17/politics/trump-erdogan-white-house-meeting-andrew-brunson/index.html>)

114. U.S. Department of State, Public Statement, “Remarks on the 2016 International Religious Freedom Annual Report,” August 15, 2017. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170819232500/https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2017/08/273449.htm>)

115. James Lankford, “Turkey's wavering support for religious freedom,” *The Washington Times*, January 16, 2016. (<https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/jan/16/turkeys-wavering-support-for-religious-freedom/>)

116. U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Press Release, “Congressional Leaders Seek Release of American Pastor Unjustly Detained in Turkey,” February 16, 2017. (<https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/press-release/congressional-leaders-seek-release-american-pastor-unjustly-detained-turkey/>)

117. U.S. Senator James Lankford (R-OK), Press Release “Senator Lankford Denounces Turkish President Erdogan Suggestion of Prisoner Swap,” September 28, 2017. (<https://www.lankford.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-lankford-denounces-turkish-president-erdogan-suggestion-of-prisoner-swap>)

118. U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, “Amendment Intended to be Proposed by Mr. Lankford and Mrs. Shaheen,” September 7, 2017, page 19. (<https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/090717-FY18-SFOPS-Managers%20Package.pdf>)

119. Amberin Zaman, “US spending bill drops Turkey sanctions,” *Al-Monitor*, March 22, 2018. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20180322203015/https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2018/03/us-spending-bill-drops-turkey-sanctions.html>)

In a *Washington Examiner* op-ed in October 2017, Lankford called Erdogan's suggestion for a prisoner swap "appalling," stressing that the U.S. "will not stand idly by as these oppressive tactics target American citizens."¹²⁰ He also urged the U.S. government to use its sanctions authority to secure the release of Brunson and others. On the one-year anniversary of Brunson's arrest, Lankford brought the issue to the Senate floor. "Turkey is not the same NATO ally and friend to the United States that they have been," he said, adding that Ankara was becoming "more and more of an authoritarian government."¹²¹ He called upon the State Department to use authorities provided by the recently passed amendment on the appropriation bill to take action against Turkish officials that are unfairly detaining American citizens.¹²²

That same month, Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Bob Menendez (D-NJ) issued a letter calling on the U.S. administration to support the suspension of non-immigrant visa services in Turkey following the arrests of U.S. consular employees there, and even encouraging further measures to be taken to pressure Erdogan to respect human rights and the rule of law.¹²³

On November 14, 2017, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) held a Senate briefing on religious freedom and human rights in Turkey. Senator Lankford gave a speech advising U.S. citizens against investing in Turkey, noting that it is unclear what could happen to them, their businesses, and their employees under the state of emergency.

USCIRF Vice Chair Sandra Jolley said that Brunson was a convenient pawn in a game of international diplomacy, and asserted that Erdogan's statements revealed his true intentions in holding Brunson hostage.¹²⁴

“Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jonathan Cohen called on the Turkish government to release all detainees not proven guilty of criminal offenses.”

On November 15, the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation, or the U.S. Helsinki Commission, held a hearing examining the factors contributing to the detention of American citizens and U.S. consulate employees in Turkey. In his opening remarks, Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) referred to Erdogan's proposal to swap Brunson for Gulen and said, "This is not justice, it is ransom," and expressed his approval for the suspension of non-immigrant visa services in Turkey in response to recent events.¹²⁵

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jonathan Cohen called on the Turkish government to release all detainees not proven guilty of criminal offenses. Cohen confirmed that fewer than a dozen U.S. or dual citizens were detained in Turkey, but also confirmed that the Turkish government had delayed access to consular services for dual nationals, and some detainees had trouble getting access to legal counsel. He stressed that the U.S. government was working at all levels to secure the release

120. James Lankford, "James Lankford: Turkey has unjustly imprisoned an American pastor for one year. Here's how the US should respond," *The Washington Examiner*, October 7, 2017. (<http://www.washingtonexaminer.com/james-lankford-turkey-has-unjustly-imprisoned-an-american-pastor-for-one-year-heres-how-the-us-should-respond/article/2636673>)

121. U.S. Senator James Lankford (R-OK), Press Release, "Senator Lankford Delivers Floor Speech on Tax Reform, Senate Gridlock Reform, and Dr. Andrew Brunson," October 4, 2017. (<https://www.lankford.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-lankford-delivers-floor-speech-on-tax-reform-senate-gridlock-reform-and-dr-andrew-brunson>)

122. Ibid.

123. U.S. Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Press Release, "McCain & Menendez Lead Bipartisan Letter Urging President Trump to Demand Turkey's Erdogan Respect Human Rights," October 25, 2017. (<https://www.mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/10/mccain-menendez-lead-bipartisan-letter-urging-president-trump-to-demand-turkey-s-erdogan-respect-human-rights>)

124. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Senate Briefing, "Turkey Today: Taking the Temperature of Religious Freedom and Human Rights," November 14, 2017. (<http://www.uscirf.gov/uscirf-events/senate-briefing-turkey-today-taking-the-temperature-religious-freedom-and-human-rights>)

125. "Prisoners of the Purge: The Victims of Turkey's Failing Rule of Law," *Hearing before Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission*, November 15, 2017. (<https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/prisoners-purge>)

of U.S. citizens, including dual nationals, and added that President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Secretary Tillerson had all publicly called for Brunson's release.¹²⁶

Senator Tillis, after his visit with Brunson in prison on March 26, 2018, announced that the pastor is "the victim of false accusations," and "is being used as a political pawn by some elements of the Turkish government."¹²⁷

Following Brunson's first hearing in Turkey on April 16, USCIRF called for the "imposition of targeted sanctions against those involved in this miscarriage of justice."¹²⁸ Four days later, a bipartisan group of 66 senators penned a letter to Erdogan demanding Brunson's release and warning that punitive measures may be necessary.¹²⁹ On April 26, Senators Lankford, Shaheen, and Tillis introduced a bill to prevent the transfer of F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft to Turkey, citing Erdogan's "reckless governance and disregard for the rule of law."¹³⁰

On May 10, following North Korea's release of three American prisoners,¹³¹ Senator Lankford reiterated his call for the immediate release of Brunson, saying, "I thought I would never say this sentence, but I would

like to see Turkey follow the example of North Korea and release American hostages they're holding."¹³²

The German Response

In Europe, Berlin has been the most vocal critic of Ankara's hostage diplomacy. In July 2017, Germany toughened its response to the arrests of its citizens and signaled it could take measures to hinder German investment in Turkey, as well as the flow of German tourists.¹³³ Foreign Minister Gabriel cautioned Germans travelling to Turkey for business or pleasure, and advised companies against investing in Turkey where "even completely innocent companies are judged as being close to terrorists" – referring to the mass post-coup purges and the erosion of property rights. "I can't see how we as the German government can continue to guarantee corporate investments in Turkey if there is the threat of arbitrary expropriation for political reasons," the minister said.¹³⁴ Signaling that the German government would be discussing further consequences, he added that financial sanctions were also being considered.¹³⁵

126. "Prisoners of the Purge: The Victims of Turkey's Failing Rule of Law," *Hearing before Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: U.S. Helsinki Commission*, September 14, 2017. (<https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/events/prisoners-purge>)

127. U.S. Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC), Press Release, "Senator Tillis Visits Pastor Andrew Brunson at Turkish Prison," (<https://www.tillis.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/3/senator-tillis-visits-pastor-andrew-brunson-at-turkish-prison>)

128. U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, "Turkey Misses Opportunity to Release Pastor Andrew Brunson, Sets Next Hearing to May 7," April 16, 2018. (<http://www.uscirf.gov/news-room/press-releases-statements/turkey-misses-opportunity-release-pastor-andrew-brunson-sets>)

129. U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Press Release, "Senators Shaheen, Tillis Lead Bipartisan Group of 66 Senators In Letter To Turkish President Erdogan Demanding Release of Pastor Andrew Brunson," April 20, 2018. (<https://www.shaheen.senate.gov/news/press/senators-shaheen-tillis-lead-bipartisan-group-of-66-senators-in-letter-to-turkish-president-erdogan-demanding-release-of-pastor-andrew-brunson>)

130. U.S. Senator James Lankford (R-OK), Press Release, "Senators Lankford, Shaheen, and Tillis Introduce Bill To Stop Transfer of Fighter Aircraft To Turkey," April 26, 2018. (<https://www.lankford.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senators-lankford-shaheen-and-tillis-introduce-bill-to-stop-transfer-of-fighter-aircraft-to-turkey>)

131. Choe Sang-Hun, "North Korea Frees American Prisoners, Lifting Hurdle to Nuclear Talks," *The New York Times*, May 9, 2018. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/09/world/asia/north-korea-americans-detainees-released.html>)

132. U.S. Senator James Lankford (R-OK), Press Release, "Senator Lankford Urges Turkey to Take Cue from North Korea: Release Americans," May 10, 2018. (<https://www.lankford.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-lankford-urges-turkey-to-take-cue-from-north-korea-release-americans>)

133. Mustafa Sonmez, "Clouds gather over Turkish-German economic ties," *Al-Monitor*, August 1, 2017. (<https://web.archive.org/web/20170802015832/https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/08/turkey-germany-considers-economic-sanctions.html>)

134. Madeline Chambers, "Germany steps up economic pressure on Turkey in rights row," *Reuters*, July 20, 2017. (<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-turkey/germany-steps-up-economic-pressure-on-turkey-in-rights-row-idUSKBN1A5116>)

135. Jefferson Chase, "Germany overhauls Turkey policy," *Deutsche Welle* (Germany), July 21, 2017. (<http://www.dw.com/en/germany-overhauls-turkey-policy/a-39766611>)

Gabriel also issued new travel advisories for German citizens in Turkey that month, recommending that they exercise “heightened caution” due to the denial of consular access to Germans detained there.¹³⁶ In August 2017, the minister called on the European Union to take harsher measures in response to Erdogan’s policies, which he said were “in blatant contradiction to our European value system.”¹³⁷ He recommended that the EU reduce pre-accession funds to Turkey and direct funds towards civil society instead of the government. He also called on the European Investment Bank to refrain from launching new projects in Turkey.

“Chancellor Merkel said that Germany would further reduce economic cooperation with Turkey in an effort to pressure Ankara to release detained German citizens.”

A month later, Chancellor Merkel said that Germany would further reduce economic cooperation with Turkey in an effort to pressure Ankara to release detained German citizens.¹³⁸ As a high-level German official expressed to the authors in May 2018, the current German policy is that there will be no normalization of relations with Turkey as long as there are German citizens in Turkish prisons for political reasons.

The Greek Response

Turkey’s Greek neighbors have also responded to Erdogan’s hostage diplomacy. Athens has occasionally pursued a tit-for-tat strategy, while also showing some leniency toward Ankara in the hopes that it reciprocates.

Soon after the July 2016 coup attempt failed, eight Turkish putschists stole a helicopter and fled to neighboring Greece, where they have been seeking asylum ever since. Despite Ankara’s calls for these fugitives’ extradition, Greek courts have been slow to respond. So when Turkish officials arrested the two Greek soldiers Angelos Mitretodis and Dimitris Kouklatzis in early March, Ankara, in effect, reciprocated.

Greece responded to this move by condemning what Prime Minister Tsipras called “power games” and “blackmail.” Yet, on April 19, a Greek court decided to release one of the eight Turkish fugitives.¹³⁹ But then, on May 2, another Greek court slapped a five-month prison term and a 1,500-euro fine on a Turkish municipal worker for his accidental “illegal border crossing” into Greek territory.¹⁴⁰ This time, unlike their Turkish counterparts, Greek authorities released and sent the Turkish municipal worker back to Turkey within three days of the hearing. Upon his return home, the worker told Turkish reporters that he “was not subject to any mistreatment” during the ordeal.¹⁴¹

Another three days later, however, on May 8, Greece accepted the asylum request of a second Turkish coup fugitive. The saga continues.

136. Ibid.

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A Transatlantic Strategy to Defeat Erdogan's Hostage Diplomacy

Faced with the challenge of hostage diplomacy, American and European officials have chosen to engage Ankara quietly and at the bilateral level. This has only emboldened Erdogan and strengthened the Turkish president's bargaining position. The perceived willingness of NATO member states to consider pragmatic deals with Erdogan to rescue their nationals must not continue. There is need for a coordinated transatlantic policy to transform the nature of the interaction with Ankara from bilateral and transactional bargaining to a multilateral engagement based on values. The U.S. and the EU member states need to provide a clear message and joint response to Erdogan's hostage diplomacy.

All bilateral and multilateral deliberations with Turkey should start with the issue of hostages. American and European officials need to unequivocally convey to their Turkish counterparts that this is a top priority for their governments and the transatlantic alliance. Berlin's policy of no normalization as long as there are German political prisoners would be more effective if implemented by its Western partners.

U.S. and EU authorities need to be more blunt in their travel warnings about Turkey, clearly spelling out the risks of becoming a hostage with no due process, attorney-client privilege, or consular access, and the possibility of up to seven years of pre-trial imprisonment. Western officials stationed in Turkey and their families, as well as Turkish nationals working for Western consulates, take great risks when they serve in Turkey.

Washington and its transatlantic partners must also reject the spurious issuance of red notices through Interpol. Indeed, authorities need to develop improved checks against Ankara's abuse of the Interpol system.

“Ultimately, only a strong, coordinated, and unwavering response can deter the Turkish president from further using Western nationals as pawns to advance his political agenda.”

Ultimately, only a strong, coordinated, and unwavering response can deter the Turkish president from further using Western nationals as pawns to advance his political agenda. The U.S. and the EU should consider targeted sanctions, such as visa bans for Turkish officials responsible for hostage taking and withholding of international aid, such as the EU's Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. The U.S. could also use Global Magnitsky designations to freeze the assets of Turkish officials facilitating hostage diplomacy. Visa bans and other sanctions could be extended to private-sector partners of the Turkish government who help smear and frame Western nationals in pro-government propaganda outlets, precluding the possibility of fair trial and due process for detained victims.

Only a concerted transatlantic strategy can put an end to Erdogan's hostage diplomacy, free Western nationals wrongfully detained in Turkey, and prevent American and European citizens from becoming bargaining chips. Without resolute action from its allies, Ankara's drift from transatlantic values is sure to continue.

Appendix: Full List of Western Detainees in Turkey and the Charges Against Them (Since July 15, 2016)

Name(s)	Country of Origin	Nationality	Occupation	Affiliation	Charges	Detainment	Release	Days in Custody	Location
Ece Heper	Canada	Turkish-Canadian	n/a	n/a	Insulting the president	30-Dec-16	27-Mar-17	87	Kars Women's Prison
Miroslav Farkas	Czech Republic	Czech	n/a	n/a	Terrorism	14-Nov-16	n/a	564	Sirnak, Van
Marketa Vselichova	Czech Republic	Czech	n/a	n/a	Terrorism	13-Nov-16	n/a	565	Sirnak, Van
Olivier Bertrand	France	French	Journalist	Les Jours	No charges	11-Nov-16	13-Nov-16	2	Gaziantep
Loup Bureau	France	French	Journalist	Freelance	Terrorism	26-Jul-17	15-Sep-17	51	Sirnak
Mathias Depardon	France	French	Photojournalist	Freelance	No charges	8-May-17	9-Jun-17	32	Gaziantep Immigration Authority
Dogan Akhanli	Germany	German of Turkish origin	Writer	n/a	Armed robbery	19-Aug-17	20-Aug-17	1	Granada, Spain
Enver Altayli	Germany	Turkish-German	Retired intelligence officer	MIT	Terrorism	20-Aug-17	n/a	282	Sincan Prison, Ankara
David Britsch	Germany	German	n/a	n/a	No charges	2-Apr-17	22-Dec-17	264	Erzurum Removal Centre
Suat Corlu	Germany	Turkish married to a German citizen Mesale Tolu	Journalist, activist	Socialist Party of the Oppressed	Terrorism	5-Apr-17 and 19-Jan-18	29-Nov-17 and last week of Jan-18	233+	Silivri Prison, Istanbul
Kadim D.	Germany	Turkish, resident of Germany	n/a	n/a	Insulting the president	28-Jul-17	29-Jul-17	1	Unknown border crossing
Adil Demirci	Germany	Turkish-German	Journalist, social scientist	ETHA News Agency	Terrorism	13-Apr-18	n/a	49	Istanbul

KEY

■ Western nationals

■ Western dual nationals

■ Western employees, residents, or relatives

Name(s)	Country of Origin	Nationality	Occupation	Affiliation	Charges	Detainment	Release	Days in Custody	Location
Sharo Garip	Germany	German	Anthropologist	University of Van	Terror propaganda	Travel ban began on 13-Feb-16	Travel ban until 19-Dec-17	1 day; 2 year travel ban	Van
Peter Steudtner	Germany	German	Human rights consultant	Humanist Institute for Cooperation (Hivos), Amnesty International	Terrorism	5-Jul-17	25-Oct-17	112	Silivri Prison, Istanbul
Mesale Tolu	Germany	Turkish-German	Journalist, translator	ETHA News Agency, Ozgur Radyo, Socialist Party of the Oppressed (ESP)	Terrorism; terrorist propaganda	30-Apr-17	19-Dec-17	233	Bakirkoy Women's Prison, Istanbul
Deniz Yucel	Germany	Turkish-German	Journalist	Die Welt	Terrorist propaganda; inciting hatred	14-Feb-17	16-Feb-18	367	Silivri Prison, Istanbul
Unknown	Germany	German of Turkish origin	Advisor at the Bundestag group of Die Linke	The Left (Die Linke)	No charges	Unknown	Unknown	1	Istanbul Ataturk Airport
Unknown	Germany	German of Turkish origin	Lawyer	n/a	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Dimitris Kouklatzis	Greece	Greek	Soldier	Hellenic Army	Espionage	2-Mar-18	n/a	91	Edirne
Angelos Mitretodis	Greece	Greek	Soldier	Hellenic Army	Espionage	2-Mar-18	n/a	91	Edirne
Bram Janssen	Netherlands	Dutch	Photo journalist	AP	No charges	25-Jun-17	25-Jun-17	0	Istanbul
Olaf Koens	Netherlands	Dutch	Journalist	RTL	No charges	25-Jun-17	25-Jun-17	0	Istanbul
Unknown	Netherlands	Turkish-Dutch	n/a	n/a	Insulting the president	Jul-17	Unknown	Unknown	Istanbul Ataturk Airport
Ali Gharavi	Sweden	Iranian-Swedish	Information security consultant	Humanist Institute for Cooperation (Hivos), Amnesty International	Terrorism	5-Jul-17	25-Oct-17	112	Silivri Prison, Istanbul
Hamza Yalcin	Sweden	Turkish-Swedish	Writer	Odak	Insulting the president; terrorism	3-Aug-17	29-Sep-17	57	Barcelona El Prat Airport, Spain

KEY

■ Western nationals

■ Western dual nationals

■ Western employees, residents, or relatives

Name(s)	Country of Origin	Nationality	Occupation	Affiliation	Charges	Detainment	Release	Days in Custody	Location
Joe Robinson (Joseph R.)	U.K.	British	n/a	YPG	Terrorism; terrorist propaganda	27-Jun-17	28-Nov-17	154	Didim, Aydin
Miya Rojkan (Mira A.)	U.K.	British resident, Bulgarian of Turkish descent	n/a	n/a	No charges	24-Jun-17	4-Jul-17	10	Didim, Aydin
Veselina Rojkan (V.P.R.A.)	U.K.	British resident, Bulgarian of Turkish descent	n/a	n/a	No charges	28-Jun-17	4-Jul-17	6	Didim, Aydin
Hakki Akdeniz	U.S.	Turkish-American	Restaurateur	n/a	No charges	15-Aug-17	15-Aug-17	2 hours	Silvan, Diyarbakir
Andrew Brunson	U.S.	American	Pastor	Izmir Resurrection Church	Terrorism; espionage; insurgency	7-Oct-16	n/a	602	Sakran Prison, Izmir; Kiriklar Prison, Izmir
Norine Brunson	U.S.	American	Pastor's wife	Izmir Resurrection Church	No charges	7-Oct-16	19-Oct-16	12	Harmandali Migration Center
K. Canturk	U.S. employee's daughter	n/a	n/a	n/a	No charges	10-Oct-17	16-Oct-17	6	Istanbul; Amasya
Nazmi Mete Canturk	U.S. employee	Turkish, employed by U.S. government	Staff member	U.S. Consulate General in Istanbul	No charges	10-Oct-17	16-Oct-17, currently under house arrest	6	Istanbul; Amasya
S. Canturk	U.S. employee's wife	n/a	n/a	n/a	No charges	10-Oct-17	16-Oct-17	6	Istanbul; Amasya
Clyde Forsberg	U.S.	American	Academic	Karabuk University	Aiding and abetting terrorism	13-Aug-17	17-Aug-17	4	Karabuk
Serkan Golge	U.S.	Turkish-American	Physicist	NASA	Terrorism; espionage	6-Aug-16	n/a	664	Iskenderun Prison, Hatay
Ryan Keating	U.S. employee	American	PhD student	Ankara University, volunteer at Ankara Kurtulus Church	Detained for threatening national security	17-Oct-16	18-Oct-16	1	Istanbul Ataturk Airport
Dion Nissenbaum	U.S.	American	Journalist	Wall Street Journal	No charges	27-Dec-16	30-Dec-16	3	Istanbul
Lindsey Snell	U.S.	American	Journalist	Freelance	Violating a military zone	6-Aug-16	12-Oct-16	67	Hatay

KEY

■ Western nationals ■ Western dual nationals ■ Western employees, residents, or relatives

Name(s)	Country of Origin	Nationality	Occupation	Affiliation	Charges	Detainment	Release	Days in Custody	Location
Metin Topuz	U.S. employee	Turkish, employed by U.S. government	Staff member	U.S. Consulate General in Istanbul	Espionage; insurgency; attempting to overthrow the government	4-Oct-17	n/a	240	Silivri Prison, Istanbul
Hamza Ulucay	U.S.	Turkish, employed by U.S. government	Translator	U.S. Consulate in Adana	Inciting the public to rally; terrorism	23-Feb-17	n/a	463	Mardin
15 International Medical Corps Staff	U.S.-based	11 Syrians and 4 other foreign nationals	Aid workers	International Medical Corps (IMC)	No charges	20-Apr-17	5-May-17	15	Gaziantep

KEY

■ Western nationals: 25 ■ Western dual nationals: 9 ■ Western employees, residents, or relatives: 22 Total: 56

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Cover Illustration by Daniel Ackerman

About The Authors

Dr. Aykan Erdemir, senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, is a former member of the Turkish Parliament (2011 to 2015) who served in the EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary Committee, EU Harmonization Committee, and the Ad Hoc Parliamentary Committee on the IT Sector and the Internet. As an outspoken defender of pluralism, minority rights, and religious freedoms in the Middle East, Aykan has been at the forefront of the struggle against religious persecution, hate crimes, and hate speech in Turkey. He is a founding member of the International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief, and a drafter of and signatory to the Oslo Charter for Freedom of Religion or Belief (2014), as well as a signatory legislator to the London Declaration on Combating Antisemitism.



He has edited seven books, including *Rethinking Global Migration: Practices, Policies, and Discourses in the European Neighbourhood* (KORA) and *Social Dynamics of Global Terrorism: Risk and Prevention Policies* (IOS Press). He is co-author of the 2016 book *Antagonistic Tolerance: Competitive Sharing of Religious Sites and Spaces* (Routledge).

On April 27, 2016, Dr. Erdemir was awarded the Stefanus Prize for Religious Freedom in recognition of his advocacy for minority rights and religious freedoms.

Amb. Eric S. Edelman is a senior advisor to the Foundation for Defense of Democracies' Turkey Program. He retired as a career minister from the U.S. Foreign Service on May 1, 2009. Amb. Edelman has served in senior positions at the Departments of State and Defense as well as the White House where he led organizations providing analysis, strategy, policy development, security services, trade advocacy, public outreach, citizen services and congressional relations. As the undersecretary of defense for policy (August 2005-January 2009) he oversaw strategy development as DoD's senior policy official with global responsibility for bilateral defense relations, war plans, special operations forces, homeland defense, missile defense, nuclear weapons and arms control policies, counter-proliferation, counter-narcotics, counter-terrorism, arms sales, and defense trade controls.



He served as U.S. ambassador to the Republics of Finland and Turkey in the Clinton and Bush Administrations and was principal deputy assistant to the vice president for national security affairs. In other assignment he has been chief of staff to Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, special assistant to Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Robert Kimmitt and special assistant to Secretary of State George Shultz. His other assignments include the State Department Operations Center, Prague, Moscow, and Tel Aviv, where he was a member of the U.S. Middle East delegation to the West Bank/Gaza autonomy talks.

He is currently distinguished fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a visiting scholar at the Philip Merrill Center for Strategic Studies at the Johns Hopkins University and a senior associate of the International Security Program at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University.

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P.O. Box 33249
Washington, DC 20033-3249
(202) 207-0190
www.defenddemocracy.org