



## RESOLUTION ON SPAIN

### **The Spanish Government must not become the executor of the Erdogan Regime in its fight against Freedom of Expression**

The Turkish Government has requested the extradition of the Swedish journalist Hamza Yalcin and the German author Dogan Akhanli through the use of Interpol red notices. Both writers of Turkish origin had been arrested in August by Spanish police forces. While Akhanli could leave jail under conditions, his Swedish colleague remains under arrest since six weeks. The Spanish justice must now decide on the request for extradition presented by the Turkish authorities.

On several occasions, PEN International has made clear that these requests were solely based on political motivations. In view of the fact that inside Turkey the situation of freedom of expression and human rights has worsened dramatically, as stated repeatedly by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner and that the prevailing conditions for independent journalists and authors has become critical, we are profoundly concerned that these requests for extradition pursue the sole aim of prosecuting detractors of the Erdogan Regime not just inside Turkey but beyond its borders.

In the case of Dogan Akhanli, the German Ministers of Justice and Foreign Relations have recently written a letter to their Spanish counterparts alleging "serious political and legal concerns" in view of the Turkish request for extradition. In April 2017, the [Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe](#) noted that 'Interpol and its Red Notice system have been abused by some member States ... in order to repress freedom of expression or to persecute members of the political opposition beyond their borders' and calls on all member states of the Council of Europe to 'refrain from carrying out arrests ... when they have serious concerns that the notice in question could be abusive'.

Article 3 of the European Convention on Extradition to which Turkey is a signatory excludes to proceed for political means. The current rates of pre-trial detention, lack of access to lawyers and evidence and the lack of independence and effectiveness of the justice system means that writers and journalists have no expectation of a fair trial within the Turkish justice system. It is intolerable that requests for extradition pursued by political motivations would be honoured.

#### **PEN International urges the Spanish authorities to:**

- Immediately and unconditionally release Dogan Akhanli and Hamza Yalcin;
- Take into account Turkey's human rights record when assessing requests for international law enforcement cooperation;
- To refrain from carrying out arrests when they have concerns that the notice in question could be abusive.

**PEN International calls on Turkey:**

- To release all those imprisoned for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.

**PEN International calls on Interpol to:**

- Carry out urgent reviews of Turkish Red Notices and Diffusions as a matter of urgency, in order to detect and remove those that were disseminated in violation of its Constitution.