



March 15, 2017

**URGENT CALL FOR ACTION:**

**Chairperson of Human Rights Association (İHD) Diyarbakır Branch and Vice-Chairperson of İHD Headquarters M.Raci Bilici Must Immediately be Released!**

Chairperson of Human Rights Association (İHD) Diyarbakır Branch and Vice-Chairperson of İHD Headquarters M.Raci Bilici has been arrested this morning (March 15,2017) and still in custody at Diyarbakır Anti-Terror Branch. By this operation, along with Raci Bilici, 11 old and new representatives of the NGOs in Diyarbakır have been arrested. According to the information obtained by the lawyers, alleged charges are still not learned since morning due to the confidentiality order on the investigation file.

Human Rights Association is an internationally recognised human rights organisation and has played a vital role in the promotion of human rights and democracy in Turkey, since 1986.

As well-known by everyone, the important role human rights defenders has been recognised in various international documents such as the OSCE Document of the Moscow Meeting (1991), the Vienna Declaration (1993) or the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998). Also, in April 2004 UN prepared fact sheet no.29 titled as 'Human Rights Defenders: Protecting the Right to defend Human Rights' to make UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders more clear. Moreover, due to the increased pressure on human rights defenders not only in Turkey but all around the World despite of all these assessments, UN General Assembly adopted a special resolution (70/160) on 17 December 2015 allocated again on UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and raised their concerns on the matter.

All these documents contain provisions protecting human rights defenders who face many risks because of their work for the protection, development and promotion of human rights. Promoting respect for democracy and human rights is only possible when human rights defenders can carry out their work in a safe environment without obstructions.

In this regard, we emphasize that M. Raci Bilici carries out all his activities duly in scope of human rights values for many years. The operation against and detention of Raci Bilici is unacceptable under no circumstances..

As Human Rights Association and Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, we are calling upon the international community to take urgent action for the release of Raci Bilici and the other NGO representatives.

**HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION**  
**HUMAN RIGHTS FOUNDATION OF TURKEY**

**Actions requested:**

- i. Release M.Raci Bilici and other NGO representatives immediately and unconditionally, as their detention is arbitrary since it only aims at sanctioning the legitimate human rights activities;
- ii. Put an end to all forms of harassment, including at judicial level, against them, as well as all human rights defenders in Turkey;
- iii. Comply with all the provisions of abovementioned international documents.

**List of Authorities in Turkey**

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