



Minister of Justice
Bekir Bozdağ
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanlığı
06659 Ankara
Turkey

Dear Minister,

Prominent lawyer and human rights defender Eren Keskin is currently appealing a conviction under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for a speech she made at a public meeting on human rights in the Çerkezköy district of Tekirdağ province, in western Turkey on the 20th February 2005. From her speech, the indictment cites the following passage: “The state is capable of slaughtering a 12-year-old child. That is the savage framework of the state. Turkey has got to account for it. Turkey’s history is a dirty history.”

Eren Keskin was referring to the killing of Uğur Kaymaz, a 12-year-old boy and his father Ahmet Kaymaz during an army operation on the 21st November 2004 in Kızıltepe district of the eastern province of Mardin, Turkey. In February 2014, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) found that there had been violation of Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR): Right to life, in this case.

Eren Keskin does not deny that she used these words but argues that she was expressing legitimate criticism of the state, protected by her right to freedom of expression.

On 11 December 2014, the Çerkezköy court issued its reasoned judgment to convict Eren Keskin and sentence her to one year in prison, reduced to 10 months. The court ruled not to suspend the sentence or commute it to a fine on the basis of the “defendant’s character, insufficient belief in the fact that she would not commit the offence again and her past convictions”.

Eren Keskin has appealed the conviction, which is currently pending at the Supreme Court of Appeals.

Amnesty International considers Eren Keskin’s conviction under Article 301 to violate her right to freedom of expression. Should Eren Keskin be imprisoned, she would be considered a prisoner of conscience.

Amnesty International believes that Article 301, even in its amended form, represents an unfair restriction of the right to freedom of expression and should therefore be abolished.

If Eren Keskin’s conviction is confirmed at the Supreme Court of Appeals and that she is imprisoned, Amnesty International will declare her a prisoner of conscience.

Yours sincerely