



10 DOWNING STREET
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22 February 2017

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Ms Brindley

Thank you for your letter of 27 January in advance of my visit to Turkey.

Turkey is an indispensable partner for UK trade, counter-terrorism cooperation and regional security. My visit on 28 January provided a valuable opportunity to further deepen this relationship and reach agreements. This includes confirming a new strategic security partnership and a trade working group to explore ways to boost UK-Turkey trade.

During my visit, I also raised the importance of Turkey maintaining the rule of law and upholding its international human rights obligations as the Government has undertaken to do. We have long encouraged Turkey to work towards the protection of fundamental rights and we will continue to encourage the full protection of human rights, including freedom of expression. As a modern democracy, we expect Turkey to undertake any legal processes, including against lawyers, journalists and politicians, transparently and with full respect for the rule of law.

Please be assured that we will continue to engage the Turkish Government on these issues and to urge respect for freedom of media, which is essential to the long term health of Turkish democracy. As part of our human rights work we, along with the EU Commission office and like-minded missions, monitor high profile human rights trials. We will carry on taking a keen interest in the situation.

We welcome Turkey's recent steps to address Council of Europe concerns by reducing the custody period and creating a mechanism for review of dismissals under the State of Emergency. The UK supports the dialogue between Turkey and the Council of Europe on implementation of the Emergency Decrees, including engagement with the Venice Commission.

Your letter also raises the situation in south-east Turkey, where the ongoing violence is extremely concerning. We absolutely condemn the attacks in the same way as we do all terrorism. Although we believe Turkey has a legitimate right to defend itself against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), our thoughts remain with the victims and the civilians who have been caught up in the terrible violence. As in any conflict, civilian casualties should be avoided and human rights should be fully protected. We stand ready to help a return to the peace process in any way we can.

Thank you, once again, for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tony Blair', written in a cursive style.

Ms Kirsty Brimelow QC