



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

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By email: coordination@barhumanrights.org.uk

Dear Mr Richard Atkins QC & Ms Schona Jolly QC,

Thank you for your letter of 5 April to Sir Alan Duncan, Foreign Office Minister for Europe and the Americas, about the rule of law in Turkey. The Eastern Mediterranean Department has been asked to reply.

Since the Minister's reply to your letter of 15 May 2018 we have continued our work to encourage Turkey to uphold the rule of law, and while issues do remain our work has made a difference in some significant areas.

We were pleased to note the lifting of the State of Emergency, in July 2018. Although some of its measures remain in place under subsequent legislation we recognise this as a key step for Turkey returning to a state of normality under the rule of law.

The ongoing practice of excessive use of pre-trial detention remains a concern. The British Embassy in Ankara regularly engages with Turkish authorities on this issue and we work alongside likeminded partners to discourage this practice. For example, British diplomats regularly monitor trials, including those of journalists and human rights defenders. These include cases such as that of Amnesty Chair Taner Kılıç, released from pre-trial detention in August 2018.

The British Embassy in Ankara also provides support and funding to a number of Turkish civil society organisations working in the area of fundamental freedoms, including the rule of law. For example, last year we supported a project in partnership with the Human Rights Agenda Association strengthening the capacity of lawyers on the application of ECHR in human rights cases in Turkey.

Further to this, we are engaging with the recent joint report by the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute and Human Rights Watch on the situation of lawyers in Turkey. Officials from the British Embassy in Ankara attended the presentation of the report in Istanbul and officials here will do the same in London on

20 May. We will reflect across the network on the report's findings and what more we can do to address the situation of lawyers in particular.

In addition to this type of work, we also raise issues relating to the rule of law at all levels with the Turkish government. Sir Alan Duncan has been vocal on these issues, both publicly and privately, during his various visits to Turkey since the attempted coup in 2016.

We will continue to monitor the situation in Turkey closely, using our diplomatic network to promote issues related to the rule of law and encouraging Turkey to live up to its international obligations.

Yours sincerely,

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN DEPARTMENT