

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

As the Biden administration formulates its foreign policy in regard to Turkey, we ask that you aim to address the troubling human rights abuses taking place under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Turkey has long been a key United States ally. Unfortunately, President Erdogan has strained the relationship between our nations. Strategic issues have rightfully received significant attention in our bilateral relationship, but the gross violation of human rights and democratic backsliding taking place in Turkey are also of significant concern.

President Erdogan and his Justice and Development Party have used their nearly two decades in power to weaken Turkey's judiciary, install political allies in key military and intelligence positions, crack down on free speech and free press, and wrongfully imprison political opponents, journalists and minorities. Since 2016, more than 80,000 Turkish citizens have been imprisoned or arrested and more than 1,500 nongovernmental organizations have been closed to suppress political opposition. Among those arrested on dubious criminal charges include three Turkish staff employed by the U.S. State Department. We urge you to prioritize their cases, including their immediate release and dismissal of all charges, in your engagements with Turkey.

President Erdogan's government even brought its style to the streets of our nation's capital, when during Erdogan's 2017 visit to the United States, Turkish security personnel assaulted peaceful protestors and federal employees. Four of Erdogan's guards still face charges in the United States for the incident. They remain at large in Turkey.

While it is in our mutual interest for the United States and Turkey to remain strategic allies and repair the rifts between us, we believe changes to President Erdogan and his party's behavior are vital to seeing that relationship restored. We hope that State Department under your leadership and the Biden administration more broadly will elevate human rights and democratic backsliding concerns in our bilateral relations. To that end, we pledge to work with you so that we can not only advance our nation's national security interests, but also uphold our commitments to supporting human rights, the rule of law, and democratic values.

Sincerely,



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Anthony Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph. D.
Member of Congress

Colin Allred
Member of Congress

Jodey C. Arrington
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
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Herrera Butler
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G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Ken Calvert
Member of Congress

Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress

Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress

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Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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Jim Cooper
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Jim Costa
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Joe Courtney
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Dan Crenshaw
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Charlie Crist
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Henry Cuellar
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Ruben Gallego
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Andrew Garbarino
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Ronny Jackson
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Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress

Mike Johnson
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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Kaiali'i Kahele
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

John Katko
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William R. Keating
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Trent Kelly
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
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Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

Andy Kim
Member of Congress

Young Kim
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Adam Kinzinger
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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Zoe Lofgren
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Barry Loudermilk
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Alan Lowenthal
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Nicole Malliotakis
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Kathy Manning
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Lucy McBath
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Kweisi Mfume
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Joe Wilson
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