

URGENT ACTION

FREE ARBITRARILY DETAINED ACTIVISTS NOW

Activists Hivda Selen, Sinem Çelebi and Doğan Nur were arbitrarily detained on the day of the Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride march and have been held in pre-trial detention since 30 June on baseless charges related to peaceful assembly. Their trial's first hearing is set for 8 August at Istanbul Criminal Court of First Instance No. 51. This case marks an alarming escalation in the criminalization of LGBTI+ expression and peaceful assembly in Türkiye. They must be immediately released, and all charges dropped. No one should be detained and prosecuted simply for exercising their right to peaceful assembly.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Mr Akın Gürlek

Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor

Çağlayan Meydanı

Şişli Merkez Mah.

Abide-i Hürriyet Cad. No: 223

Şişli/İstanbul, Türkiye

Email: istanbulcbs@adalet.gov.tr

Dear Chief Public Prosecutor,

*I am writing to express deep concern over the arbitrary detention of activists **Hivda Selen, Sinem Çelebi and Doğan Nur**, who remain in pre-trial detention following the Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride march on 29 June. The authorities' targeting of these three activists, highlights the ongoing repression of LGBTI+ activism.*

According to human rights observers, including Amnesty International, around 20 activists peacefully gathered on a residential street in Ortaköy. Before they could finish reading their press statement, police arrived, chased them, and arbitrarily detained activists and journalists, without making an announcement for dispersal. At least 53 people were detained from different parts of the city that day.

Hivda Selen, Sinem Çelebi and Doğan Nur were not present at the march. They were arrested elsewhere, questioned about their participation in Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride, accused of failure to disperse despite warning and remanded in pre-trial detention.

Amnesty International has reviewed the charges and found no ground for prosecution. Holding individuals without a clear legal basis violates Türkiye's own laws and its international human rights obligations.

I urge you to ensure that Hivda Selen, Sinem Çelebi, and Doğan Nur are released immediately and unconditionally and the charges against them, and all those targeted for exercising their right to peaceful assembly, are dropped.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Authorities in Türkiye have unlawfully and systematically hindered Pride marches since 2015, violating the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, expression, and non-discrimination, protected under both the Turkish Constitution and international law, including the ICCPR and European human rights standards. Authorities have imposed blanket bans on Pride marches and related LGBTI+ events, including film screenings and picnics.

In June, Amnesty International issued an [Urgent Action](#) calling on the Turkish authorities to ensure that peaceful Pride marches take place without restrictions. Along with others, the organization also monitored the Istanbul Trans Pride on 22 June and Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride on 29 June, both of which were unlawfully banned. More than 100 people were detained during both these events. For the first time since 2015 however, three people detained on the day of the LGBTI+ Pride were placed in pre-trial detention.

The authorities banned the Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride march and shut down metro lines in the Beyoğlu district and cancelled some ferry services connecting the European and Anatolian sides of the city. On 29 June, large numbers of law enforcement officers were deployed in key districts including Beyoğlu, Kadıköy, and Şişli.

Among the 53 people detained that day, Doğan Nur was walking by when a police officer grabbed him and forced him into the police containment near to where Pride participants had gathered. Hivda Selen and Sinem Çelebi were in a different neighbourhood. According to her testimony, Hivda Selen was buying coffee with a friend when the police stopped her for an ID check. Sinem Çelebi was also stopped for an ID check while walking down the street. Neither were informed of the reason for the ID checks or their subsequent detention, which lasted several hours before they were taken to the police station, all in violation of Türkiye's laws.

On 30 June, the Criminal Judgeship of Peace no. 5 ruled to place Hivda Selen, Sinem Çelebi and Doğan Nur in pretrial detention, while releasing others with judicial control measures. On 14 July, the İstanbul Criminal Court of First Instance No. 51 accepted the indictment against 53 people, charging them with "unarmed participation in unlawful meetings and demonstrations" and "failure to disperse despite warning."

Amnesty International examined the indictment and found no material evidence that they have committed an internationally recognizable offence. All charges should be dropped, and no one should be prosecuted simply for exercising their right to peaceful assembly.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Turkish and English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 17 September 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Hivda Selen (she/her), Sinem Çelebi (she/her), Doğan Nur (he/him)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

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