

## **Background on Eren Keskin**

Eren Keskin is a prominent human rights defender and lawyer in Turkey. She is the vice-president of the Human Rights Association (İHD). She is also the founder of the Legal Aid Bureau against Sexual Harassment and Rape in Custody.

For more than thirty years, Keskin has struggled for fundamental rights and freedoms in Turkey, especially for the Kurds, women, and the LGBTI+ community, as well as sexual violence, torture, ethnic identity, enforced disappearances, and deaths in custody.

Keskin has played a significant role in the establishment, activation, and strengthening of civil society structures in Turkey.

In 1995, Keskin was convicted for using the word “Kurdistan” in a newspaper article, and spent 6 months in prison. Keskin has been arrested, attacked and threatened for her legitimate and peaceful work in the defense of human rights. She was assaulted in 1994, and again in 2001. The İstanbul Bar Association withdrew her licence to practice for one year in 2003 for using ‘Kurdistan’ in a newspaper column.

Within the context of the worsening human rights situation in Turkey, notably since the coup attempt in July 2016, Keskin is once again at the center of intimidation attempts. As part of a solidarity campaign to support Özgür Gündem newspaper, whose editorial staff was imprisoned, Eren Keskin held the title of “editor-in-chief” of the newspaper from 2013 to 2016, when it was closed by the authorities. She has been convicted and sentenced to 12.5 years in jail for having published articles deemed to have “degraded” the Turkish nation and “insulted” the Turkish president. She is currently free pending the appeal, but she has been banned from traveling.

Despite all, Keskin continues to stand for equal rights and freedoms for all, sometimes under the most difficult and life-threatening conditions. She continues to work on political cases mainly related to the freedom of expression and thought.