PRESS RELEASE

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Statement by the Right Livelihood Award Foundation on the detention of Cumhuriyet staff

“The latest crackdown on Cumhuriyet tells us that democratic freedoms in Turkey are being eroded every day and that the regime will not hesitate to suppress any dissenting voices. We stand in solidarity with our 2016 Laureate Cumhuriyet and demand immediate release of its editor and staff,” said Ole von Uexkull, Executive Director, Right Livelihood Award Foundation.

Cumhuriyet received the 2016 Right Livelihood Award “for their fearless investigative journalism and commitment to freedom of expression in the face of oppression, censorship, imprisonment and death threats.” Cumhuriyet is expected to receive its award at a ceremony in Stockholm on 25 November.

Announcing Cumhuriyet as the 2016 Right Livelihood Award Laureate on 22 September 2016, Ole von Uexkull said: “In the face of immense personal risks, Cumhuriyet is flying the flag of free speech in Turkey, during a critical time for the people of that nation. Presenting Cumhuriyet with the Right Livelihood Award applauds their dedication to investigative journalism and highlights their critical contribution to press freedom in their home country and around the world.”

In a recent interview on the occasion of 100 days since the failed coup in Turkey, Orhan Erinç, President of Cumhuriyet Foundation, said: “Pressure is applied, and not only to journalists. Even teachers, academics, writers, artists are put under pressure, often through thousands of lawsuits for libel – put forward by the President personally. People are afraid to express their criticism of the President and the government. The media are either directly or indirectly under the control of the government; few media outlets remain – such as Cumhuriyet – that are not under the control of the government. These few independent newspapers are still trying to defend their professional ethic, but they fear serious consequences.”

Cumhuriyet is Turkey’s oldest national newspaper, staunchly committed to impartiality and public interest in its reporting. Cumhuriyet employees have faced imprisonment, threats and assassinations in their outspoken reporting on issues of human rights, gender equality, secularism and protection of the environment.

Media reports say Cumhuriyet’s current editor-in-chief Murat Sabuncu has been detained earlier this morning, and another 12 executives had detention warrants issued against them.
Read full interview: http://www.rightlivelihoodaward.org/100-days-since-the-failed-coup-in-turkey/

More information about Cumhuriyet:  
http://www.rightlivelihoodaward.org/laureates/cumhuriyet/

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About the Right Livelihood Award

The Right Livelihood Award was established in 1980 to “honour and support courageous people and organisations offering visionary and exemplary solutions to the root causes of global problems”. It has become widely known as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize' and there are now 166 Laureates from 68 countries. In addition to presenting the annual awards, the Right Livelihood Award Foundation supports its Laureates, particularly those who may be in danger due to the nature of their work. Jakob von Uexkull, a Swedish-German professional philatelist, sold his business to provide the original funding. Since then, the awards have been financed by individual donors.