

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 30, 2023

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

As members of Congress, we respectfully request that you review whether any Turkish individuals or entities (government or non-governmental) meet the criteria for designation under the Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act, or any other relevant statute, for placing a bounty on information related to the capture of Enes Kanter Freedom.

According to Mr. Kanter Freedom,¹ the Turkish government is offering up to 10 million Turkish lira, or about \$500,000, for information leading to his capture. The Turkish government has issued at least 10 arrest warrants for Kanter Freedom beginning in 2017 for “insulting the President” related to his speaking out against Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.² In 2017, during a visit to Indonesia, the Turkish government employed local police to kidnap Kanter Freedom, making reports of a bounty even more troubling.³

Mr. Kanter Freedom is a law-abiding U.S. citizen who has been outspoken about human rights across the world. The Turkish government has not provided evidence that Kanter Freedom has engaged in any illicit action, supported terrorism, or used violence against the Turkish state. It seems clear that Mr. Kanter Freedom is being targeted by Turkey for exercising his fundamental rights in expressing political opinions, which are protected under the U.S. Constitution.

We are deeply concerned by the continuing deterioration of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights and rule of law in Turkey. Under President Erdogan, Turkey has grown increasingly authoritarian, with the government systematically detaining, prosecuting, and convicting political opponents, journalists, and critics of the President on charges of terrorism and insulting the President. We urge your administration to press the Turkish government on freedom of speech, free exercise of religion, and other fundamental rights, specifically regarding the case of Enes Kanter Freedom.

The Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (22 USC 2656) authorizes the President to impose sanctions with respect to any foreign person the President determines, based on credible evidence, “is responsible for extrajudicial killings, torture, or other gross violations of internationally recognized human rights committed against individuals in any foreign country

¹ <https://nypost.com/2023/01/12/ex-nba-star-enes-kanter-has-500k-turkish-bounty-on-his-head/>

² <https://www.axios.com/2021/08/06/basketballs-enes-kanter-turkish-arrest-warrants>

³ <https://hrf.org/turkey-hrf-denounces-erdogans-threats-to-enes-kanter-freedom/>

who seek... to obtain, exercise, defend, or promote internationally recognized human rights and freedoms, such as the freedoms of religion, expression, association, and assembly, and the rights to a fair trial and democratic elections.”

We request a response to the following questions before Friday, February 3, 2023:

- (1) Does any Turkish person or entity, including any member of any national or local level security or police force in Turkey, meet the criteria of designation for sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act or any other relevant statute for issuing a bounty or reward for information regarding the arrest or capture of Enes Kanter Freedom? Please provide a full list of persons or entities responsible in any way, directly or indirectly, in the issuance of the bounty or of any gross violations of internationally recognized human rights against Enes Kanter Freedom, along with a detailed justification regarding whether or not such persons or entities meet the criteria for sanctions.
- (2) Has the Biden administration confronted the Turkish government with regard to threats issued by their government against Enes Kanter Freedom? Was this matter discussed with the Turkish Foreign Minister on January 18, 2023? Will the Biden administration take concrete action to hold those Turkish persons or entities responsible for any gross violations of internationally recognized human rights against Enes Kanter Freedom?

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Kevin Hern
Chairman, Republican Study Committee



Brian Babin
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



James R. Baird
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress

Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress

Warren Davidson
Member of Congress

Barry Moore
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress

Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress

Jack Bergman
Member of Congress

Burgess Owens
Member of Congress

Daniel Webster
Member of Congress

Keith Self
Member of Congress

Ron Estes
Member of Congress

David Rouzer
Member of Congress

Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress

Ben Cline
Member of Congress

Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

Mike Ezell
Member of Congress



Gary Palmer
Member of Congress



Carlos A. Gimenez
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Tracey Mann
Member of Congress



Chris Smith
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Chris Stewart
Member of Congress



Nathaniel Moran
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress



Monica De La Cruz
Member of Congress



Kevin Kiley
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Nick LaLota
Member of Congress



Erin Houchin
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress

Andy Barr
Member of Congress

Rich McCormick, MD
Member of Congress

Jim Banks
Member of Congress

Randy K. Weber
Member of Congress

Mike Garcia
Member of Congress

Michael Guest
Member of Congress

Austin Scott
Member of Congress

Bob Good
Member of Congress

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Cc:

Department of Treasury
Department of State