EFA logo

en

Press release | 04.06.2012

EU appeal for Kurdish activist Leyla Zana

EFA Press Release

MEPs, including some from the European Free Alliance group in the European Parliament, have called on the EU to intervene in the case of Kurdish activist Leyla Zana.

Ms Zana, a human rights activist and member of the Turkish parliament, was sentenced to ten years imprisonment last week on a charge of spreading illegal propaganda, though she currently enjoys immunity as a sitting MP.

The charge related to speeches she made between 2007 and 2008 - some of them in European parliaments - and many have criticised the sentence as an attack on free speech. She has twice been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and won the European Parliament's Sakharov prize for freedom of thought in 1995.

Now a group of MEPs has written to the EU's Foreign Affairs chief Baroness Ashton calling on the EU to condemn the verdict and ask Turkey to restore Ms Zana's civil and political rights.

MEPs co-signing this letter include **Jill Evans, Ana Miranda, Frieda Brepoels, François Alfonsi** and others. Several EFA MEPs met Leyla Zana when she visited the European Parliament in Strasbourg last month, and EFA Group President Jill Evans visited Turkey and Kurdistan in April this year.

In their letter to the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, the MEPs say:

"We are profoundly concerned about the fact that Ms. Leyla Zana has been sentenced to ten years in prison. We are also dismayed by the fact that she has been deprived of her political rights such as the right to vote and the right to run for political office.

"She is an outspoken, courageous and nonviolent ambassador for the Kurdish people and for women in particular. She was indeed the first Kurdish woman to win a seat in the Turkish parliament in 1991. She has also been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize on several occasions and has been awarded the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1995. Ms Zana enjoys therefore wide international recognition.

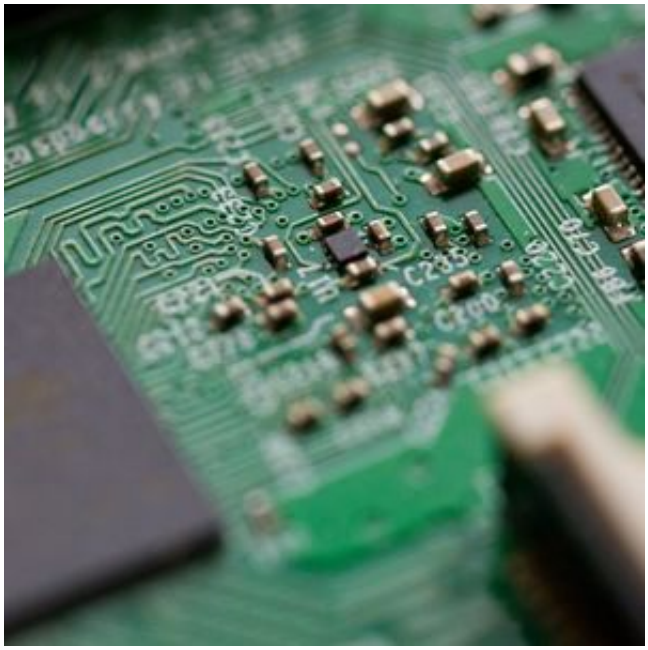
"We believe that these accusations are unfounded. They are a violation of the right to freedom of speech and,

in general, of political freedom. Therefore, we would like to request that the European Commission and the Council of the European Union condemns the verdict and deploys all necessary means to ensure that the Government of Turkey re-establishes Ms. Leyla Zana's civil and political rights."

Recommended

Press release

chris-ried



Digital Fairness Act falls short on addictive design

11.11.2026

Press release



[Ukrainian children in Russia: Parliament to call for u…]

11.11.2026

Press release

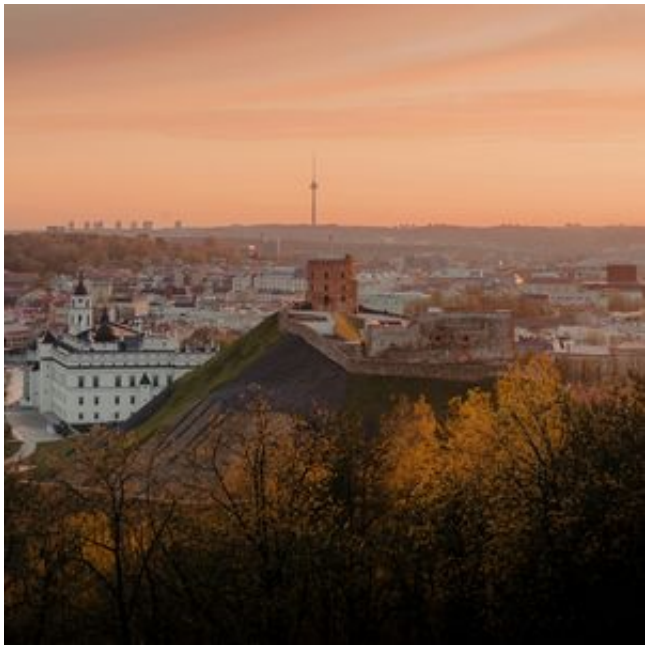
Redek Kozak



[Czech public media under attack - with Markéta Gregoro…]

11.11.2026

Press release



[Greens/EFA in Vilnius: Lithuanian Presidency must lead…]

05.11.2026

Responsible MEPs



Jill Evans

Member

Please share

- E-Mail