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Turkey Sets Trial for Andrew Brunson , on: 2018/3/22 13:23

From World Wstch Monitor...

trial of US pastor Andrew Brunson
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March 21, 2018 By Barbara G. Baker Turkey

Imprisoned US pastor Andrew Brunson is set to stand trial before a Turkish criminal court on 16 April on espionage- and terrorism-related charges that could jail him for up to 35 years.

Seventeen months after the pastor's arrest in the port city of Izmir, a formal indictment accepted by the Izmir 2nd Criminal Court has been released to Brunson and his lawyer but only after the 62-page document was leaked illegally to the Turkish media.

According to Brunson's lawyer, Ismail Cem Halavurt, the leaking of the indictment before the parties have seen it amounts to a violation of confidentiality.

Halavurt now has less than a month, before the trial hearings open, to examine the prosecution's legal file of its investigations. As alleged evidence supporting the indictment's claims against his client, the entire set of documents has been kept sealed until now.

The Turkish indictment accuses Brunson of links with both of Turkey's most prominent terrorist organisations: the FETO network of Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen, accused of orchestrating the July 2016 attempted coup; and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), leading a 35-year armed separatist struggle against the Turkish state.

The accusations against the pastor rest heavily on the testimony of several "secret" witnesses interrogated by the prosecution. One witness claimed Brunson had met frequently with a local leader of the FETO network; under prosecution questioning, the pastor denied knowing or ever meeting the named individual, and said he had never knowingly or willingly met with any FETO member.

Last June, spokesman Soner Tufan of the Association of Protestant Churches in Turkey challenged the vague accusations against Brunson appearing in the pro-government press, saying: "Let the law proceed. Put forth the evidence, if you have any, and start the trial as soon as possible. Justice is all we want."

Once Brunson's indictment was made public last week, Tufan commented in an Al-Monitor interview: "This is an eclipse of reason. To claim that Andrew was a FETO executive and sought to destroy this country is like an insult and offense to reason. Who would believe such a thing? He has spent an important part of his life trying to stay in this country, telling about Jesus in all his sermons and works. How could such a person be the member or the executive of an Islamic order?"

"Andrew Brunson is an innocent person," Tufan told World Watch Monitor today (21 March). "The indictment does not contain any real evidence. There is no real legal proof to use against him. It is a very political hostage case. That is why I had to demand the worst punishment against him, to make him more valuable."

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared openly last September that he was willing to exchange Brunson for Fethullah Gülen, the Turkish Muslim cleric living in exile in the US, who is accused by Ankara of masterminding the failed coup. This January, Erdoğan went on to state that he would refuse to extradite any jailed "suspects" to the United States until Washington hands over Gülen.

From his prison cell in Izmir, Brunson recently wrote: "Let it be clear. I am in prison not for anything I have done wrong, but because of who I am - a Christian pastor. I desperately miss my wife and children. Yet I believe this to be true: it is an honour to suffer for Jesus Christ, as many have before me. My deepest thanks for all those around the world who

are standing with me and praying for me.â€

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Posted by Blaine Scogin

**Re: Turkey Sets Trial for Andrew Brunson - posted by JFW (), on: 2018/3/22 13:58**

Brother Bear,

Thanks for sharing this- we are one body!  
I wouldnâ€™t have been aware otherwise.  
Will def lift our brother and his family in prayer

**Re: - posted by Gloryandgrace (), on: 2018/3/22 21:05**

Turkey seems to be taking its cues from CNN where poisoning public opinion with propaganda is their way of making sure justice equals whatever opinion they currently hold.