



Fighting for Media Freedom Since 1970

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 26, 2017

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**Media Council Hawaii Names 2 Turkish Journalists as Honorary Board Members, and
Condemns Attacks on Turkish Media.**

In a show of solidarity with Turkish journalists and media workers, Media Council Hawaii has named **Kadri Gürsel** and **Ahmet Şık** as honorary members of its board. MCH has chosen these two as representative of all Turkish journalists who are either jailed or facing charges for nothing more than committing acts of journalism.

Turkey has imprisoned more journalists and media workers than any other country. More than 150 have been jailed, many others are facing charges, news and broadcast companies have been closed, new media websites have been taken down, and media workers have been forced into unemployment.

Since physical distance makes it almost impossible for MCH to participate directly in the numerous protests in Turkey about this issue, we have chosen to signify our solidarity with Turkish colleagues by choosing **Kadri Gürsel** and **Ahmet Şık** to join our board. Both are distinguished, award-winning journalists, who are skilled practitioners with high ethical standards.

Ahmet Şık's distinguished career includes employment with major Turkish newspapers, and he is a member of the Turkish Journalist Union. He was first arrested in 2011 prior to publication of his book, *The Imam's Army*, which investigated the Gulen Movement and its leader Fethullah Gulen. This led to the banning of this book, which was published outside of Turkey. In 2014, he was awarded the UNESCO Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. In 2016, the prosecutor in that case requested dismissal of charges. However, in December 2016, he was again arrested. This arrest and ongoing detention is for the subject matter of 11 Tweets, said to be "propaganda of terrorist organizations."

Kadri Gürsel likewise has been prominent as a journalist for leading publications, including the Turkish daily, Milliyet, Al-Monitor's Turkey Pulse, and Turkish daily newspaper, Cumhuriyet. He also served as correspondent for Agence France Press for a number of years. Gürsel also serves as executive board member of the Vienna-based International Press Institute (IPI), and has been nominated for the UNESCO Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize, the same prize won by **Ahmet Şık** in 2014. In what is seen as an all-out attack on the opposition secular press, he was arrested in November 2016 with numerous other Cumhuriyet writers, editors, and board members on charges of carrying out activities on behalf of terrorist organizations. The trial for Mr. Gürsel and his Cumhuriyet codefendants began this week in Istanbul.

The pretext for this crackdown on journalists and the independent media is the failed coup attempt of July 15, 2016. On that occasion, Turkish citizens, representing a broad cross-section of the public, including persons of devout religious beliefs, secular views, and from both the ruling and opposition parties, took to the streets to stop the coup by elements within the Turkish military. More than 250 gave their lives to uphold democracy.

The subsequent misuse of emergency powers to arrest and intimidate all critics of government, and in particular to silence independent media, is an insult to the valiant Turkish people who gave their lives for democracy.

MCH adheres to the belief that “Democracy Dies behind Closed Doors.” The current oppression of the media in Turkey slams the door of democracy on the face of the public both in Turkey and around the world!

We demand an end to this injustice and a return to the rule of law and democratic values. We look forward to a future when our newly named board members will be able to join us as free citizens!

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Founded in 1970, MCH is composed of individuals from the community and the media and is a non-partisan, non-profit, non-governmental, independent organization that seeks to support a free and independent media and the right of all persons to freedom of communication. MCH is a founding member of the World Association of Press Councils (WAPC).

MCH Board Members

Officers: Chris Conybeare, President, Beth-Ann Kozlovich, Vice President,
Marya Grambs, Secretary, Teresita Bernales, Treasurer

Members at Large: Brenda Ching, Josh Frost, Ikaika Hussey, Gerald Kato,
Steve Pearson, Liam Skilling, Lucy Witeck

Honorary Members: Kadri Gürsel, Ahmet Şık