

**Urgent Action Office** 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 [urgentaction@amnesty.ca](mailto:urgentaction@amnesty.ca)  
First UA: 41/24 Index: EUR 70/8041/2024 Serbia of May 13, 2024

## SERBIA

### DEMAND IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF POLITICAL ACTIVIST ON HUNGER STRIKE

Ecevit Piroğlu, a political activist from Türkiye, has been wrongfully detained in an immigration detention center in Serbia since June 2021. Despite a Serbian court ruling against his extradition, he faces the threat of deportation back to Türkiye. On February 12, he started a hunger strike at the Padinska Skela detention center to protest his ongoing detention. He has vowed to continue until he is freed. Since the hunger strike began, his health has sharply declined due to the lack of proper medical care. Piroğlu is also at risk of being unlawfully returned to Türkiye, where he would likely face serious human rights abuses. He must be released immediately.

#### Write to the Prime Minister of Serbia urging the government to:

- Ensure the immediate release of Ecevit Piroğlu from the immigration detention center as his detention is unlawful and arbitrary.
- Refrain from any attempt to deport him to Türkiye or a third country which could return him to Türkiye where he faces a real risk of serious human rights abuses.
- In the meantime, grant him access to adequate healthcare at a facility of his family's choice, where he can receive treatment from qualified medical professionals in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent.

#### Write to:

Head of the Government of Republic of Serbia  
Mr Miloš Vučević  
Beograd, Nemanjina 11  
Email: [predsednikvlade@gov.rs](mailto:predsednikvlade@gov.rs)  
Salutation: *Dear Prime Minister,*

#### And copy:

His Excellency Dejan RALEVIC  
Ambassador  
Embassy of the Republic of Serbia  
21 Blackburn Avenue  
Ottawa, ON K1N 8A2  
Tel: (613) 233-6280 Fax: (613) 233-7850  
Email: [communication.ottawa@mfa.rs](mailto:communication.ottawa@mfa.rs)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ecevit Piroğlu, a Turkish national and a member of the Kurdish ethnic minority, is a prominent political activist and a founding member of the Socialist Democratic Party. In June 2021, he was arrested at the Belgrade International Airport by Serbian authorities on an Interpol warrant issued by Türkiye, accusing him of affiliation with a “terrorist organization”. He spent a year detained at the Country

Prison in Belgrade during extradition proceedings and was then transferred to an immigration detention center for foreigners, where he remains to this day.

Ecevit Piroğlu's request for asylum in Serbia was denied in August 2022, with little consideration given to his appeal to the Asylum Commission. Following this rejection, instead of being allowed to leave Serbia as he intended, he was rearrested in January 2024 and returned to immigration detention under the claim that he was in Serbia illegally—a claim currently contested by his lawyers. In response to his prospect of indefinite detention, Piroğlu began a hunger strike on February 12. As of May 9, his weight has dropped to 50 kg, his health is failing, and he feels increasingly weak. His family, who recently visited him, is extremely concerned about his health.

Despite a Serbian court rejecting Türkiye's extradition order, there remains a risk that Piroğlu could be deported to Türkiye, or to a third country that might extradite him to Türkiye, through an immigration process. This would breach Serbia's international obligations to not return individuals to countries where they face serious human rights violations. There are precedents of Serbia extraditing foreign nationals in ways that violate international law, including interim measures from the UN Committee against Torture. Given the conditions in Türkiye, especially for Kurdish minorities and political activists, Piroğlu faces a real risk of arbitrary detention, unfair trials, and torture if deported.

***Please take action as soon as possible until July 8, 2024! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.***