Open Government Partnership

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Dear Members of the OGP Steering Committee,

**Letter of Concern**

Kimse Yok Mu (KYM) was an international humanitarian aid and development organization which provided humanitarian relief in more than 100 countries with the support of more than 220,000 volunteers. KYM received numerous national and international awards in recognition of its humanitarian activities including the Turkish Assembly Outstanding Service Award in 2008. Holding United Nations ECOSOC Special Consultancy Status, UN Global Compact and Clinton Global Initiative membership, KYM worked with more than 140 partners including UN bodies, governments, GOs and NGOs. KYM was a partner of the African Union and a voting member of CIVICUS. KYM was selected as one of the world’s best 100 NGOs by nonprofit Global Geneva.

KYM’s humanitarian activities were severely hindered when the Council of Ministers abruptly cancelled KYM’s right to collect donations without prior permission. This right, which is granted through a Cabinet Decree, was cancelled arbitrarily by another cabinet decree, subjecting KYM to obtain government permission before each fundraising activity. Bearing in mind that the process of acquiring permission is notoriously slow, the process curbs KYMs freedom of association and legitimate humanitarian activities. There have been many audits which lasted for months as thousands of documents were searched. The outcome reports of the audits, except the first two, were not sent to KYM despite several requests. Even though there was no clear and convincing evidence of wrongdoing in the organization, inspectors intentionally wrote up fabricated allegations about KYM.

KYM’s right to collect donations without prior approval was suspended as a result of the one of these fabricated audits. Again, we did not receive this audit report and are unaware of the content. While the oppression and the audits continued, on October 9th, 2014 the Ministry of Interior sent a notification via the Governor of Istanbul to terminate all ongoing activities of KYM. Additionally, the Governor of Istanbul sent letters to banks to freeze all accounts of KYM without any court decision, and with no legal justification. All mobile phone operators in Turkey were told to cancel their KYM accounts which enabled individuals to make instant donations to the organization. KYM sued the Ministry of Interior, the Governor of Istanbul, the Head of Department (Ministry of Interior, Department of Association), some media and others who have been trying to defunctionalize KYM and stop its humanitarian work around the globe. The board of directors have faced extreme pressure during the process and an arbitrary arrest warrant has been issued to take the previous presidents of KYM, Mr. İsmail Cingöz and Ayşe Özkalay into custody without any formal legal proceeding.

When inspectors could not find any evidence of illegal action, they accused KYM of being an illegal organization in another official written notice sent from the Chief Public Prosecutor’s office in Ankara to KYM on November 25th, 2014. This was a baseless smear allegation. Even our lawyers are denied access to the case file since a confidentiality order has been given about the case. These arbitrary and unlawful orders are overt violations of the universally recognized right to have a fair trial and freedom of information to access public records.

The government has initiated a witch hunt after the coup attempt on 15 July 2016 and announced State of Emergency. In this regard, even though there is an ongoing juridical process and there is no tangible evidence, the board of directors were removed in 22.07.2016 by the notification of Provincial Associations Directorate of the Istanbul Governor’s Office and the next day Kimse Yok Mu was shut down by a decree of State of emergency in 23.07.2016 with the accusations of founding and funding a terrorist organization, and recruiting members for it.

Although there was no legal ground, all our bank accounts were blocked and our operations were blocked. KYM and its branches were inspected and raided by the police. Several board directors of branches were arrested without any legal evidence.

With this letter, we would like to bring your attention to matters regarding the extreme oppressions and injustice imposed upon Kimse Yok Mu and we request you to stand beside us in showing concern for these injustices and for our legal struggle.

Board of Directors of Kimse Yok Mu Association