

# Open letter to the Turkish Embassy: Freedom for Ali Ercan Akpolat!

Christoph Vandreier, Johannes Stern  
23 June 2026

*On Wednesday, June 24, at 2:30 p.m., the following open letter from the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP) and the editorial board of the World Socialist Web Site in Germany will be delivered to Türkiye's ambassador in Berlin, Gökhan Turan.*

Dear Ambassador Gökhan Turan,

We are writing to you to protest the arrest of Ali Ercan Akpolat, the mayor of the municipality of Adalar, and to demand his immediate and unconditional release.

The arrest of Akpolat and numerous other representatives and employees of the municipality of Adalar is a serious attack on democratic rights. The charges brought against him are baseless. They are clearly directed not against actual crimes but against elected mayors and opposition politicians. They are part of a broader campaign by the Erdoğan government to intimidate and disempower opposition-led municipalities through police operations, criminal prosecution and state intervention.

Akpolat is an elected mayor and is known in Türkiye and internationally for his commitment to preserving historical truth and cultural heritage. Of particular significance is his work in connection with the "Trotsky House" on Büyükada, the historic Prinkipo. There, Leon Trotsky, who together with Vladimir Lenin led the October Revolution of 1917, lived in exile from 1929 to 1933. On Büyükada he wrote some of his most important works, including his autobiography *My Life* and *The History of the Russian Revolution*, and developed his perspective for the struggle against fascism, Stalinism and imperialist war.

At the commemoration on Büyükada in 2024, Akpolat declared:

We are here today for an event of historical and contemporary political importance. It has been 91

years since Leon Trotsky, the indomitable defender of the working class who fought for an egalitarian world and lost his life for this cause, left Büyükada.

It is also the 84th anniversary of his assassination in 1940. On this occasion, I remember him with respect.

Trotsky settled in Büyükada in 1929 and spent four years here on our island. He wrote the most important of his works based on a free and egalitarian world in his house on the island. His life was intertwined with the ups and downs of the class struggle. And today we will talk about the world in chaos in the light of Trotsky's dream, struggle and works.

We have an internationally important historical and cultural heritage left by Trotsky that has been neglected for many years. Our aim is to restore the house where Trotsky lived on Büyükada and turn it into an international library and museum house. Our research and work in this direction is ongoing. Wouldn't it be great if this house, which has been abandoned to its fate for years, is transformed into a cultural center that opens its doors to the whole world?

As I conclude my speech, I respectfully salute Leon Trotsky and all revolutionaries who fought and paid a price for a better world.

These words express an understanding of the international historical and cultural significance of Büyükada that deserves recognition far beyond Türkiye. Akpolat's arrest therefore threatens not only the democratic rights of an elected mayor and the population of Adalar. It is also directed against the defence of a historical heritage that is of significance to workers,

youth, scholars and defenders of democratic rights throughout the world.

Indignation over these attacks is growing within the Turkish working class and population. Earlier this week, large protests took place on Prinkipo against the arrests. In Germany, too, the demand for the release of Akpolat and the other detainees is receiving broad support, as it becomes increasingly clear that the prosecution is politically motivated and serves to intimidate all opposition.

We call on the Turkish government to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Ali Ercan Akpolat and all those arrested as part of the operation against the municipality of Adalar;
- Drop the prosecution of Akpolat and all others affected;
- End the campaign against elected mayors, municipal councillors and municipal employees of the opposition;
- Release all political prisoners, including the more than 200 anti-NATO activists arrested in recent days;
- Fully respect the democratic rights of the population, including the right to elect representatives to office and for them to exercise these offices without intimidation and state arbitrariness;
- No obstruction in the work of preserving Leon Trotsky's house on Büyükkada and creating an international cultural and educational center.

Mr. Ambassador, we ask you to forward this protest and these demands to your government without delay.

We will follow this case closely, inform workers, youth, intellectuals, artists and defenders of democratic rights internationally about these developments, and organize further protests.

Yours sincerely,

Christoph Vandreier

Chairman of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei

Johannes Stern

Editor of the German-language edition of the *World Socialist Web Site*



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**