THE 15 JULY FOILED COUP ATTEMPT IN TURKEY

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On the evening of July 15th, a faction of the Turkish Armed Forces attempted to stage a coup in various cities of Turkey, particularly in Ankara and İstanbul. It was understood in a short time that this was a terrorist campaign. The perpetrators fired at their own people, betrayed their commanders and bombed the National Parliament and the Office of the Presidency. From the very beginning, the command chain and vast majority of the Turkish Armed Forces stood up against the coup attempt. It was merely some elements of the Air Forces, Gendarmerie and armored units that joined the violent conspiracy.

All necessary measures to foil the coup attempt were taken immediately both by the police and public prosecutors. Above all, it was the Turkish nation who thwarted the plot. They displayed a historic solidarity as they took to the streets and remained defiant. They stood bravely in front of the tanks and reclaimed their democratic rights. We have witnessed the solidarity displayed by all political parties against the threat of disruption of democratic order in Turkey.

We have solid proof that Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), which has undercover networks not only in the army but also in several state organs, staged this coup attempt. Our government has been constantly exposing the real motives of this terrorist group and its leader, Fethullah Gülen, to all allies and partners. The foiled coup is the latest criminal act revealing the danger posed by FETÖ. Along with the ongoing ones initiated in respect of FETÖ, required measures are now being taken against all those involved in the coup attempt, so that all those responsible are brought swiftly before justice. The validity of charges and the eventual sentences they would face, will be determined by the Turkish courts. There should be no doubt that the process will be conducted as usual in full respect to fundamental rights and freedoms and the rule of law, as prescribed by law.

Under the strong and resolute leadership of our President H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and as a result of a series of measures taken by our Prime Minister H.E. Binali Yıldırım; our Government and Members of Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Turkish people all together defeated this coup attempt and stood by democracy and rule of law. Throughout the

process, all the political parties and Members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly and the people stood firmly by democracy, democratic politics, democratic institutions and the Constitution. A Joint Declaration in defense of democracy was issued during the extraordinary meeting of the General Assembly on the 16th of July.

The terrorists tried to broadcast their message by taking over studios of the state TV (TRT) and raiding private media outlets. Yet the plotters' attempt to control media did not last long. It must be noted that the Turkish media also played a key role in subsiding the coup attempt. During the operations held against the terrorist group, more than 7500 have been detained, and 246 of those have been arrested till 21 July 2016. These figures will change in time. 24 coup plotters are now identified as dead. 50 coup plotters captured wounded. The operations continue as more evidence unfolds from those who were captured and their victims. Unfortunately, 208 of our citizens were killed and more than 1400 wounded. 60 of the dead are our police officers, 3 military personnel and 145 civilians. A group of eight involved in the coup attempt fled to Greece on board of a helicopter that they stole. Necessary steps have been taken for the return of the suspects and the helicopter.

This is a very extraordinary situation where Turkey was hit by a terrorist coup plot. This heinous attack was planned and carried at a time Turkey was already fighting the PKK/YPG and DEASH terrorism. However, despite the foiled terrorist coup attempt all necessary counter terrorism measures against DEASH and the PKK/YPG continue.

In this regard, our President announced Wednesday a nationwide three-month state of emergency after Friday's failed coup and early on Thursday, the decision was published in the Turkish Official Gazette and went into effect. The state of emergency was being declared under Article 120 of the Turkish Constitution. Under Article 120, in the event of serious indications of widespread acts of violence aimed at the destruction of the free democratic order, a state of emergency may be declared in one or more regions or throughout the country for a period not to exceed six months.

This move aimed at combatting the growing terror threat in the country was fully in line with the constitution and did not violate the rule of law or basic freedoms of Turkish citizens. The purpose of the state of emergency is to most effectively and swiftly take steps necessary to

eliminate the threat to democracy in our country, the rule of law, and the rights and freedom of our citizens.

We call all our partners and allies to take all possible measures to prevent the activities of FETÖ terrorist organization in their soil and not to pay credit for certain distorted comments and spinning by certain foreign politicians. Our President, Prime Minister, Government, Members of Turkish Grand National Assembly and the Turkish people all together defeated this coup attempt and stood by democracy and rule of law.

Regarding the current situation, the main backbone of the coup plotters have been captured and legal processes has already begun The Government and our nation nevertheless remain vigilant against possible attempts by individuals or residual cells to take revenge or to disrupt public order and security. The support of our Palestinian friends and all other allies and their display in words and deeds are much appreciated.