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Press release: for immediate release

IN MEMORY OF OUR BELOVED FRIEND JUDGE ESSA MOOSA

The EUTCC celebrates the life of a respected colleague and close friend, Judge Essa Moosa, an outspoken advocate of Kurdish rights and sharp critic of Turkish injustices. His huge efforts for the promotion of peace and democracy in Turkey and for the resumption of the unravelling of the peace process between the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan and the Turkish government are widely known. He referred to his friend Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu when he said that “*Dialogue between the parties is the only way to secure a peaceful resolution to the conflict and peace is a precondition for establishing a democratic Turkey. Successful dialogue will make all other methods unnecessary.*”

Essa Moosa was born on 8 February 1936 in Cape Town. He became one of Nelson Mandela’s first lawyers. In 1998 Mandela appointed him to be a judge of the High Court of the Supreme Court in Cape Town. He was a founding and executive member of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers and chaired its Human Rights Committee. He was a member of the Constitutional Committee of the African National Congress (ANC), which gave logistical support to the ANC negotiation team for the establishment of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa. He also served as the Provincial Election Agent for the ANC in the region of the Western Cape for the first democratic elections in April 1994.

In 2011 Essa Moosa joined the EUTCC. In 2012, following a call by Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu for the *Resumption of Dialogue*, he established the International Peace and Reconciliation Initiative (IPRI) with signatories such as His Holiness Dalai Lama, the former presidents Jimmy Carter and Jose Ramos Horta, Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams, former PM of Norway Kjell Magne Bondevik.

In February 2014 IPRI in cooperation with EUTCC established the Imrali Delegations led by Essa Moosa. Three delegations have so far been sent on Fact-Finding Missions to Turkey, Strasbourg and Turkey and Kurdistan. Judge Essa Moosa applied to the Turkish Minister of Justice on behalf of the 1st Delegation requesting a meeting with Mr. Abdullah Öcalan. He also headed the 2nd Imrali Delegation (February 2016) to the Council of Europe urging the CPT to pay a visit to Imrali which it did - but never reported as promised. Essa Moosa was supposed to lead the 3rd Delegation to Kurdistan and Turkey on 14-19 February 2017 but due to his illness he could not. Essa Moosa’s former letter was resent to the Minister of Justice, unfortunate for Turkey he did not respond positively to this legitimate request. Tragically, Turkish authorities have chosen another direction and in its wake follow more violence and repression, military assaults, curfews, countless arrests and infringements of civil rights, and human rights atrocities. Turkey missed its opportunity to welcome Essa Moosa- a unique and experienced mediator for peace, but we – his friends and colleagues - will continue to put pressure on Turkey to resume peace talks with Mr. Abdullah Öcalan. We will never give up.

The EUTCC sends sincere and deep-felt condolences to the family of Judge Essa Moosa. His life and tireless work and struggle for the Kurdish people and for peace and democracy in Turkey and the Middle East will continue in his spirit of love, hope and friendship. We are forever grateful for all you have done for the cause of the Kurdish people.

WE BLESS THE MEMORY OF JUDGE ESSA MOOSA

Kariane Westrheim (chairperson), Michael Gunter, Joost Jongerden, Dersim Dagdeviren