

Norway has done this before, yet another Kurd will be extradited and face torture

by The Region - 04/07/2018 16:03



The government of Norway didn't care when it extradited a 19-year-old Kurdish prisoner in 2011, and it seems that they don't care now. Norway's extradition Act Section 5 paragraph 1 [states](#) that it is illegal for Norway to engage in an extradition agreement "if the offence for which the extradition requested is regarded by the requested State as a political offence." The law, furthermore, prevents extradition "if the person sought proves that the request for his extradition has in fact been made with a view to try or punish him for an offence of a political character".

But only selectively does Norway follow its own laws.

Gulizar Tasdemir, a Kurdish activist who sought asylum in Norway, [risks](#) being sent back to Turkey where she will likely be tortured. She was a guerilla fighting against the Turkish state with the PKK, and had been in the mountains of Kurdistan for 27 years. Like Dilma Rousseff, the former president of Brazil and like Jose Mujica, the

former President of Uruguay, she left the mountains to engage in civil politics against the anti-Kurdish policies of the Turkish state. She arrived in Norway in September 2015 seeking asylum, which wasn't granted to her.

An elderly woman who suffers from illnesses, she is now being sent back to Turkey, which notably [denies permission](#) for the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture to investigate reports of abuse in its prisons. Torture is most probably the fate that Tesdemir awaits.

Norway is, notably, a signatory of Article 3 of the European Convention for Human Rights, which according to the European Court of Human Rights (as established with the [Soering case](#) of 1989) prohibits sending someone back to a country that person risks being tortured. This too has been ignored.

This is not the first time that Norway has been accused of making such an outrageous decision, particularly towards Kurds. In 2011, a 19-year old Kurdish asylum seeker called Rahim Rostami was sent to Iran, where he faced several weeks of [solitary confinement](#) and torture in Evin Prison, a known torture chamber for political prisoners. His crime? Well, some believe Mr. Rostami was being punished. He [appeared](#) twice on the investigative journalism show NRK Brennpunkt, where he spoke on behalf of asylum seekers to complain about the deplorable conditions from which they live. One day he decided to open a bank account, he was then arrested and immediately sent back to Iran.

In the immediate aftermath of the scandal, which outraged the world, the institutions of Norway began their grand act of political theatre. "The Department of Justice has requested from the Immigration Appeals Board a statement on this case.", the Secretary of state in Ministry of Justice and Public Security [told](#) Ny Tid magazine.

And it seems that Norway's decision to extradite is quite haphazard, dare we say, irrational. The country was once home to the infamous Krekar, a mullah of Iraqi Kurdish origin, who was the leader of Ansar al-Islam, an Al-Qaeda affiliate. Krekar lived in Norway, and proudly defended Al-Qaeda on Norwegian television, a national embarrassment for the country. As social anthropologist Sindre Bangstad put it in his book, *Anders Breivik and the Rise of Islamophobia*, In 2003 after a request by the government to have him extradited proved unsuccessful, the public was told that "The order could not be fulfilled ... since both International human rights conventions and Norwegian law prevented Norwegian authorities from extraditing individuals who would risk capital punishment in the countries to which they were extradited".

Be it capital punishment or torture, if Norway (to its great merit) wasn't willing to extradite a person who risked torture, with that person even being a member of Al-

Qaeda (they only decided to do so [last year](#) after Italy agreed to try him before a court of law), why would they have this lapse of judgement now?

It's probably not a coincidence. Norway and Turkey have had their diplomatic spats recently. On March 2017, Turkey [summoned](#) the Norwegian ambassador after the nation decided to grant asylum to people Ankara insisted were behind a failed coup attempt in 2016. NATO had to [apologize](#) on behalf of Norway after a training exercise put the faces of Erdogan and Turkey's founder Attaturk as bull's eye training for Nato soldiers.

Norway is not being a "*good friend*" in other words and it could be trying to get on Erdogan's good side. But why does a Kurdish activist have to be the sacrifice, the offering, for such a gesture? Maybe we can find an answer on the [website](#) of Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The total volume of the Norwegian investments in Turkey between 2002-2017 as of September amounted to 648 million Dollars, whereas the Turkish direct investments in Norway during the same period was 190 million Dollars".

Oslo and Ankara have a good and lucrative friendship. But good friends don't help each other torture dissidents. Norway ought to be ashamed of itself.