

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN  
ON THE OCCASION OF  
THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE HUMAN  
RIGHTS ACTION PLAN**

**2 MARCH 2021**

The Great Turkish Nation,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to greet you wholeheartedly.

Welcome to the Presidential Complex, the home of our nation and a battle-scarred venue.

I hope that this meeting which is held to announce the Human Rights Action Plan will yield beneficial results for our country, nation, the judiciary and all institutions.

I would like to express my thanks to the Minister of Justice and his team who have been working diligently for a long time to finalize this document.

I would also like to express my gratitude to all institutions and parties who contributed to the preparation of the Action Plan by presenting their views and criticism.

Almost two years ago when announcing the Judicial Reform Strategy Document to the nation from this venue, we had stated that the Strategy was the initial step for future reform.

Today, we are happy to have fulfilled this responsibility and take great pleasure in presenting the Action Plan to our nation.

Since change is constant in our lives, our efforts for reform must also be constant.



Our nation has witnessed the historic and significant steps we have taken in this respect since we took the responsibility to govern the country.

The Action Plan which we will announce today is an indication of our unwavering resolve for change and reform.

The Human Rights Action Plan is a reflection of the past and a deliberation for the future.

We are determined to take necessary steps for the full implementation of the plan.

God willing, we will also be sharing the economic reform program with our nation next week.

My Great Nation,

History shows that we rise, grow stronger and enjoy peace and prosperity as a society whenever we uphold justice.

By the same token, our country has faced decline, weakness as well as external and internal hardship whenever we diverged from the path of justice.

Moreover, bitter experiences in our recent history have taught us that justice is the foundation of the state which is itself founded on human rights and dignity.

Therefore, our compass in the cause for justice is focused on human beings and guided by human dignity and human rights.

Our civilization has taught us the importance of the fine balance that must be ensured for justice to prevail.

In other words, justice will prevail only if handled with the meticulousness of a goldsmith; because “underwatering a plant will dry it up while overwatering will make it wilt”.

I might add that we do not necessarily water all the plants we see.

While justice may be served by watering a wilting plant, watering a thorn may cause harm.

The following quote from the late Malik el-Shabazz, or Malcolm X as he is known around the world, presents another aspect of our understanding in this respect:

“I am for truth, no matter who tells it. I am for justice, no matter who it is for or against.”

It is with this understanding that we welcome all views that aim to deliver justice on the basis of human rights with the meticulousness of a goldsmith.

It is with this understanding that we sincerely adopt international documents based on universal values and prepared by the human family.

We do not aim to copy international documents without question, neither are we in favour of remaining indifferent to the universal achievements of humanity.

The reforms that we have introduced so far were not implemented upon the insistence of one or the other organization; they were implemented in the interest of our nation.



Similarly, the Human Rights Action Plan has been prepared to address the expectations and demands of our nation.

Each reform effort has been the product of the understanding and passion that we share with our nation to ensure greater freedom, participation and pluralistic democracy. This is true for the Human Rights Action Plan as well.

We will continue to stand with our citizens to protect them against all kinds of threats that target human dignity, belief, values and life.

As always, we derive our strength and confidence from the wisdom of our nation who has made this territory her motherland for centuries by creating prosperity from diversity.

This nation which has managed to suppress one of the most heinous attacks in history during the July 15 coup attempt without straying from the rule of law will, God willing, continue to succeed in all areas, including democracy and development.

As I always say, I am proud to be a member of such a noble nation and thank God for it a thousand times.

My Great Nation,

Each activity in this Action Plan which has been prepared in line with the expectations of our nation is based on broad-based consultation.

All parts of our society, including relevant ministries, institutions, the economic and business community and representatives of civil society organizations were consulted during the preparation of the plan.

The Human Rights Action Plan which includes 9 goals, 50 objectives and 393 activities is the product of this process.

The Action Plan will be implemented within two years.

The institutions responsible for implementing each activity in the Action Plan and the calendar for the completion of these activities will be announced in two weeks.

Today, I would like to share with you some general information about the goals, objectives and activities included in the document.

The vision of the Action Plan is “Free individual, strong society; a more democratic Turkey” and starts with 11 fundamental principles.

These inalienable principles which represent the commitment of our state towards our nation are as follows:

1. Human beings have natural rights which are inalienable, and the duty of the state is to protect and advance these rights.
2. Human dignity, as the most fundamental of all rights, is under the effective protection of the law.
3. Everyone is equal before the law without any discrimination based on language, religion, race, colour, gender, political views, philosophical beliefs, sect or other reasons.



4. The overarching principle for administrative activities is to provide public services to all with integrity and in an equal and impartial manner.

5. Legislation includes clear, understandable and foreseeable rules without room for doubt and public authorities implement these rules with due regard for the principle of legal security.

6. There can be no interference with the freedom of contract which violates the principle of legal security and the protection of acquired rights.

7. The state protects and fosters the freedom of enterprise and the right to work on the basis of free market rules based on competition and the social state principle.

8. Judicial and administrative procedures are conducted by protecting, safeguarding and enforcing the presumption of innocence, the right not to be labelled as a criminal and the principle of individual criminal liability.

9. No one may be deprived of their liberty for expressing their views or criticism by respecting the personality rights of others.

10. The rule of law state prevails in all areas to guarantee rights and liberties as well as justice.

11. Anyone whose rights are alleged to have been violated shall have unfettered access to effective legal remedies; access to justice is the basis for respecting rights and freedoms.

The Action Plan consists of nine goals which are based on these principles.

My Great Nation,

The first goal of the Human Rights Action Plan is “A MORE ROBUST HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION SYSTEM”.

Our objective in this respect is to further strengthen the rule of law state based on human rights.

We will regularly review the legislation and implementation in this respect and take necessary measures.

In this respect, we will be focusing more on our efforts regarding the European Union, especially with respect to the Visa Liberalization Dialogue.

Under this goal, we also aim to enhance the effectiveness of the individual application system to the Constitutional Court.

We are initiating a comprehensive effort to amend political party law and the election law in order to strengthen democratic participation.

We are focusing on enhancing the effectiveness of human rights organizations.

The decisions of the Ombudsman Institution and the Human Rights and Equality Institution of Turkey will be made publicly available, with due care for the protection of personal data.



We are taking steps to address the demands and expectations of our citizens in a more effective, swift and transparent manner because we believe that “justice delayed is justice denied”.

In this context, compensation for long proceedings will be provided by the Human Rights Compensation Commission, without having to apply to the Constitutional Court.

Furthermore, we are establishing an independent “Human Rights Monitoring Commission for Penal Institutions” with the participation of representatives from bar associations, civil society organizations and universities to ensure a human rights-based approach with respect to the monitoring of penitentiary institutions.

As a reflection of the social state, the Action Plan strongly focuses on victims’ rights as well.

We aim to support victims of crime and vulnerable groups in particular from the moment they arrive in the courthouse to prevent further grievances.

For this purpose, we are enhancing the effectiveness of the psychosocial support and information services provided to victims, especially children, women, the disabled and the elderly.

In this context, we are also increasing the number of Judicial Support and Victim Services Units and Judicial Interview Rooms.

My Great Nation,

The second goal of the Human Rights Action Plan is the “INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY AND STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT TO A FAIR TRIAL”.

As you know, we have taken a number of historic steps in this regard so far.

We abolished State Security Courts.

We changed the organization of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors in line with the principle of democratic representation.

Inspection duties have been included in the mandate of this Council.

We added the principle of “impartiality” to judicial independence.

In this context, we are taking new steps because we believe that the rule of law state can exist only if courts are independent and impartial, and they respect human rights.

Judgments should be fair, but also delivered within a reasonable period of time.

For this purpose, we are providing geographical guarantees to judges and prosecutors to expedite decisions and enhance the delivery of justice.

Promotion and inspection mechanisms are being revised on the basis of objective performance criteria such as sufficient reasoning, accuracy and the emphasis on human rights in judicial decisions.



This year, we commemorate Yunus Emre around the world with the theme “Turkish as a Global Language” and, in this context, we aim for highest linguistic standards in judgments.

To that end, we are going to increase pre-service and in-service trainings to ensure that judgments are adequate, convincing and easily understood.

We are extending the supervisory mandate of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors to ensure that reasonings are robust, consistent and well-argued. Furthermore, appeal courts will have authority to quash decisions on these grounds.

We are extending the scope of measures to protect the presumption of innocence which is essential to ensure trust in the judicial system, especially with respect to the right not to be labelled as a criminal.

We are extending the application of “target time” in the judicial system to ensure that fair decisions are delivered within a reasonable period of time.

This practice has been in place for the last three years and we achieved our goals on average by 81% last year.

We hope to increase this ratio to 100%.

We are introducing the target time practice for appeal proceedings and forensic medical reports as well.

In this framework, we are making it mandatory to write reasoned judgments within 30 days in the administrative justice system.

We are including citizens living in other countries in the highly successful electronic notification system.

The accelerated and simple trial procedures which were introduced at the beginning of last year reduced the duration of proceedings from 2 years to 2 months.

We are extending the scope of these procedures which provided many benefits for our citizens and the judicial system.

For judges, we are ensuring access to the records of the Social Security Institution over the informatics system to expedite the conclusion of labour cases.

We consider equal opportunity for all parties to be very important to ensure the strengthening of the right to a fair trial.

In this context, the Action Plan foresees the notification of indictments to the victims and the complainants.

We are also making it mandatory to notify the parties about additional information and documents included in administrative case files at a later stage.

We are making it possible, under some circumstances, for judicial and administrative authorities to act on documents which are stamped by lawyers as being the “same as the original”.

To strengthen the defence and the right to defence, we are introducing a maximum time limit for restricting the access of the defence counsel to case files.



We are also making it possible for lawyers to file individual applications to the Constitutional Court electronically.

In line with the principles of a social state, we are reducing the tax collected from lawyers for legal aid services provided to individuals with limited financial means.

We are also working on making revisions to the schedule of fees paid for the mandatory provision of legal services.

We are revising work principles for lawyers in the public sector and improving their employee benefits.

We are making it possible to conduct professional practice during a law internship.

The Action Plan also places strong emphasis on the measures to strengthen access to justice.

In this framework, we are simplifying fees and expenses for trials, execution proceedings and the notary public.

We are extending the e-hearing practice which was initiated last year, and which has been very helpful especially during the pandemic, to all civil courts.

We are making it possible to apply for legal aid through the e-government portal.

We are making video transmission technologies available to disabled, elderly and bed-ridden citizens at their location to facilitate the taking of their statements and to address similar issues.

We are establishing “Public Relations Offices” in courthouses and extending the number of front offices and information desks.

My Great Nation,

The third goal of the Action Plan is “LEGAL FORESEEABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY”.

There is no doubt that the principle of legal security is at the core of this goal.

The legal system can be trusted to the extent it meets the reasonable and justified expectations of the people based on foreseeable rules.

Therefore, our legislation must be clear, unambiguous, easily understood and applicable without any room for doubt from the point of view of both the individuals and the administration.

The legal system must also introduce some safeguards to protect citizens against alleged arbitrary practices with respect to administrative actions and decisions.

Transparency in government has been one of the most important principles we have implemented since the first day we came to power.

We established a strong legal and institutional basis within this framework, including the constitutional safeguards for the right to information.



The Action Plan strengthens the foreseeability and transparency of administrative actions and decisions even further.

For this purpose, we are reducing the time limit for responding to applications addressed to the administration from 60 to 30 days.

Similarly, we are introducing legal arrangements which are in line with the European Union “Framework for Screening of Foreign Direct investment”.

We are taking all steps necessary to facilitate the access to administrative mechanisms for individuals.

We are reassessing the legislation and practice regarding the freedom of contract and enterprise in terms of the principles of foreseeability, the protection of acquired rights and transparency.

We are abolishing all provisions which contravene with these principles and simplifying and streamlining judicial procedures and making them more comprehensible.

We are harmonizing the time limits to apply for legal remedies such as objections, appeal and cassation in the judicial and administrative justice system.

Accordingly, the application to appellate courts and cassation will start with the notification of the reasoned judgment.

We are making all decisions of first degree and appeal courts available to the public while adhering to the principles of personal data protection.

Increasing the level of professional quality and service in the judiciary is one of our permanent goals.

The Action Plan introduces a seniority requirement to be elected as a member of the Court of Cassation and the Council of State in addition to being first level and at least 45 years old.

Seniority will be a condition for other senior positions in the judiciary.

We are also introducing the system of assistant judges and prosecutors.

We are moving to paperless offices in all execution offices.

Specialization is very important in the judiciary in view of the fact that social and economic life is becoming increasingly more complicated through constant change and development.

Therefore, we are establishing specialized courts in areas such as finance, trade unions, zoning and expropriation as well as for tax offences and cybercrime.

We are establishing the position of “court specialist” to support judges at the courthouse.

In specialized courts such as Land Registry Courts, we are ensuring that the conclusion and success rate of cases are taken into consideration for new appointments.

We are introducing an “administrative settlement procedure” to resolve disputes between the state and real and legal persons swiftly and in the most cost-efficient manner.



We are establishing an independent and impartial “Investment Ombudsman” for the swift resolution of disputes between the administration and investors.

We are extending the scope of mediation in civil disputes and focusing on diversifying the areas of specialization of mediators.

We believe that the services of experts are closely related to the activities aimed at enhancing the quality of judicial services.

Therefore, we are restructuring the regional boards of experts.

Experts who make a habit of preparing insufficient and inaccurate reports or who engage in unethical conduct will be immediately removed from the registry.

We are ensuring the automatic distribution of case files to experts in order.

Furthermore, we are including the legislative requirements for the appointment of experts in the criteria for promotion and inspection.

My Great Nation,

The fourth goal of the Action Plan is “TO PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSOCIATION AND RELIGION”.

We placed special emphasis on strengthening these three freedom areas and introduced many amendments for this purpose.

Our governance approach is based on the individual and focuses on equal enjoyment of these rights and freedoms by all.

Key amendments introduced in 2012 and 2013 regarding freedom of expression were strengthened with the First Reform Package.

Today, we are extending the scope of these freedoms further. We are reviewing the legislation and implementation to ensure that freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and the right to demonstrate are safeguarded in the widest sense possible.

Judges, prosecutors and law enforcement will receive regular training to ensure that criticism and expressions of thought which are delivered by respecting the rights of others are not investigated.

We are reviewing the time limits for filing an action with respect to offences committed through the media, press and the internet in order to strengthen freedom of expression.

We are developing measures to facilitate the conduct of professional activities by journalists in order to enhance the standards of freedom of expression and the press.

We are ensuring that all public and private sector employees and students from all religions are allowed to take a leave during their religious holidays.

We are revising the Regulation on Foundations regarding the election and composition of the boards of directors of the foundations of the non-Muslim community.



We are expressing our strong will to counter discrimination and hate speech in order to continue to foster the pluralistic tradition which has been part of the common history, culture and civilization of our nation.

We are preparing investigation guidelines on hate crimes and we aim to ensure a more robust collection of statistics and data by enhancing our capacity and training.

My Great Nation,

The fifth goal of the Human Rights Action Plan is “TO STRENGTHEN INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS AND SECURITY”.

We have already introduced a number of amendments with regard to this fundamental right.

We introduced important amendments in legislation underlining that detention is a protection measure and should be applied only as an exception.

The amendments in the Criminal Procedure Code on the duration, scope and reasoning of detention have provided significant improvements in this regard.

When we were elected in 2002, 41% of the inmates in prisons were remand prisoners; today, this ratio has been reduced to 17%.

We continue to strengthen this understanding in line with the fundamental principles of criminal proceedings.

For this purpose, we are limiting the scope of catalogue crimes in accordance with the “principles of reasonableness and proportionality of detention”.

In this context, we are emphasizing the use of detention as an exceptional measure by “making concrete evidence a condition” in catalogue crimes.

We are introducing a vertical appeal procedure with respect to the decisions of the criminal judgeships of peace on detention and other protection measures.

In line with similar steps regarding detention, we are introducing a maximum duration for judicial control measures.

We are reviewing provisions restricting meetings with a lawyer from a rights-based perspective.

We are introducing changes in legislation to deduct time “under house arrest” as a judicial control measure from the time to be served during the enforcement of the final punishment.

We focus not only on legislation, but also on practical challenges.

We do not want our citizens to be deprived of their liberty on account of arrest warrants issued only for the purpose of taking their statements.

The Action Plan puts an end to practices such as detaining a person outside working hours or in the middle of the night in a hotel room solely for the purpose of taking a statement.

From now on, statement taking will be conducted 24/7.



We are introducing changes regarding the dismissal of cases filed upon complaint in the event of a failure to appear before the court without justification and despite annotated notification having been made.

As a result, we aim to dismiss many cases that have remained pending for many years.

My Great Nation,

The sixth goal of the Action Plan is “TO SAFEGUARD THE PHYSICAL AND MORAL INTEGRITY OF A PERSON AND PRIVATE LIFE”.

The physical and moral integrity of persons entails the inviolability of their physical and moral integrity.

Protecting the dignity and honour of an individual is the most important reason for the existence of the state.

For this purpose, we have been implementing the “policy of zero tolerance to torture and ill treatment” without exception.

As a result, the allegations of systematic torture or ill treatment have become a thing of the past.

Turkey investigates allegations of torture on the basis of very severe sanctions and is one of the few countries in the world that has lifted the statute of limitations in this regard.

To protect our achievements in this area, we are providing regular training to law enforcement and neighbourhood guards on the use of force and weapons as well as regarding actions that amount to ill treatment.

We are also removing the statute of limitations with respect to disciplinary investigations on allegations of torture.

We are increasing physical space and the number of units in hospitals allocated to forensic examinations.

We are enhancing the effectiveness of disciplinary action and recourse procedures with respect to public officials who conduct their responsibilities without due care and cause rights violations.

To safeguard the effectiveness of investigations, we are ensuring that the prosecutor who prepared the indictment is informed of the result of the proceedings.

In the same context, we are making it mandatory to make a digital recording during crime scene investigation, forensic search and physical seizure.

One of the most important aspects with regard to the protection of the security of an individual is to fight against domestic violence and violence against women.

Law number 6284 on the Protection of the Family and the Prevention of Violence against Women which was enacted in 2012 is a very progressive legislation in this area.

Our efforts in this respect will continue with the support of all institutions, civil society, the media and society at large until the day when not a single woman is a victim of violence.

The Action Plan foresees a broader network of special investigation offices across the country to investigate crimes of violence against women more effectively.



We are extending the scope of aggravating circumstances for offences committed against the spouse to include the divorced spouse.

We are criminalizing stalking including unilateral pursuit as a separate crime.

We are ensuring that lawyers are appointed to support women who are victims of violence.

The Action Plan addresses the protection of the dignity and honour of individuals separately from the protection against physical violence.

In this context, we are taking necessary measures to protect the privacy of individuals regarding information that is not relevant to the proceedings.

We are ensuring that records obtained by detecting and listening to communication as a protection measure are destroyed also in the event of an acquittal.

We are determined to ensure that body searches are performed by respecting human dignity and we will continue to provide regular training to law enforcement and prison staff in this respect.

We are completing the digital transformation of our penal institutions.

In this context, technology will be utilized more thoroughly for exchanging letters, filing petitions and following up healthcare issues in addition to video calls which enable meetings between inmates and relatives.

We are organizing programs in collaboration with public training centres, İŞKUR, local governments and the private sector to provide vocational training to individuals on probation.

We are providing these courses in order to meet the obligation to fulfil public service.

Another important objective under this heading is to protect privacy in the context of processing personal data. For this purpose, we are harmonizing the Law on the Protection of Personal Data with European Union standards.

We are also providing the possibility to appeal administrative fines issued by the Personal Data Protection Board in the administrative justice system instead of the criminal judgements of peace.

My Great Nation,

The seventh goal of the Human Rights Action Plan is “MORE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHT TO PROPERTY”.

The right to property guarantees social and economic progress for our citizens.

It is one of the fundamental responsibilities of the state to protect this natural right.

Public authorities must refrain from practices that will hinder the exercise of the right to property.

With this understanding, we are reviewing all relevant legislation on expropriation including the provisions on immediate expropriation.



We are providing an administrative remedy before the offices of the governors in respect of confiscation without expropriation and introducing administrative sanctions for negligence by public officials.

Similarly, we are ensuring that cases involving confiscation without expropriation are handled with priority.

To prevent further grievances resulting from execution proceedings and judicial proceedings, we are revising the regulation on the Law on Enforcement and Bankruptcy to ensure the broadest possible protection of the right to property.

We are ensuring the swift resolution of administrative justice claims involving property rights by accelerated proceedings.

We are establishing a system to monitor, assess and supervise zoning plans.

Similarly, we are working to remove grievances arising from subdivisions in zoning plans.

We are introducing the system of “pilot cases” with respect to disputes on the same issue involving public bodies as a party.

We aim to enhance efficiency in terms of time and resources by ensuring the binding nature of the judgments of the pilot cases over disputes on the same issue.

In the past, the administration could tell citizens “to file a case, win it and come back” even when the citizens were obviously justified in their claims; today, this era has come to an end.

We are extending the mandate of institutions for receiving applications or withdrawing an action by ensuring a regular review of established judicial case law.

We are ensuring electronic access to the land registry for owners and related persons regarding the restrictions imposed by administrative authorities.

My Great Nation,

The eighth goal of the Human Rights Action Plan is “TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL WELFARE AND PROTECT VULNERABLE GROUPS”.

This section first addresses the rights of the child.

The Action Plan further deepens and strengthens the legislative and practical reforms that we have already introduced to protect the best interests of the child.

We are doing our utmost to protect and support the physical and mental development of children by protecting them from digital risks, cyber bullying and addiction to the internet.

We are introducing a guardianship system by legal entities to ensure better care and more effective monitoring of unaccompanied children who are under international or temporary protection.

We are also updating our juvenile justice practices.

We are designing hearing rooms in juvenile courts in a child-friendly manner and ensuring that judges, prosecutors and lawyers attend hearings without wearing their robes.



We are developing a new court architecture, which will include family and juvenile courts on a separate campus, for the purpose of protecting the privacy of the family and the best interests of the child.

We are establishing juvenile offices within the directorates for probation services.

These offices will follow all phases of the judicial proceedings regarding juvenile offenders.

Youth rights are also strongly emphasized in the Action Plan. Our goal is to ensure the participation of young people in decision-making processes and public services on the basis of merit and equality.

We are introducing “Volunteering Activities” in junior high school curriculum to enhance the social and democratic participation of young people and we are extending this process to universities.

We are encouraging young people who would like to have a career in the digital world to join the software industry by completing internationally recognized certificate programs.

We are extending the scope of marriage support to encourage young people to have families.

We are preparing the “national strategy document for youth employment” to ensure the active participation of youth in the labour market and to offer more internship opportunities.

We are enhancing our efforts to establish a United Nations Youth Centre in Istanbul.

Through these efforts, we aim to contribute significantly to the 2030 Youth Strategy of the United Nations.

We will also continue to support disabled and elderly citizens and develop specific policies for them.

We are identifying and removing provisions preventing the employment of disabled individuals in senior level public positions or in public positions which are in line with their professional expertise.

We are introducing standards for medical reports which determine the level and state of disability to address grievances in this area.

We are taking new steps to ensure and facilitate the full participation of disabled and elderly citizens in voting procedures.

Furthermore, we are providing free-of-charge dormitory stays for disabled students.

In terms of social policy and on compassionate grounds, we make no distinction in our treatment of individuals who are in prison and those who are not.

We continue to extend the scope of special enforcement procedures to ensure that convicted individuals who are gravely ill, elderly or disabled may continue to serve the rest of their sentence at their residence.



We are extending the scope of probation for convicted persons who are unable to take care of themselves in prison due to their age or medical condition.

We are also engaged in efforts to improve access to justice and rehabilitation for foreigners who are under international or temporary protection.

We are establishing an effective remedy to examine complaints regarding conditions in removal centres.

We are translating forms prepared for foreigners on the rights of suspects, the accused and victims to widely spoken languages and making them available to relevant persons.

We are reviewing the offences and punishments regarding human trafficking in line with the Council of Europe Convention Against Trafficking in Human Beings and GRETA recommendations.

The protection of a healthy and viable environment is necessary to strengthen social welfare.

Therefore, we continue to conduct communication campaigns for the protection of the environment, nature and forests in particular.

We are increasing the use of renewable sources of energy.

We are amending legislation with the understanding that animals with whom we share this habitat are “living beings” rather than “goods”.

We are establishing an independent mechanism, which will include representatives of consumer organizations, on food security.

We maintain our unwavering determination to fight against substance abuse for the protection of public health.

We are increasing the number, capacity and effectiveness of ÇEMATEM and AMATEMs which conduct prevention and treatment activities.

We are establishing a five-year “abuse monitoring model” whereby the treatment and rehabilitation of individuals who are on probation for the first time for a substance abuse offence are monitored through interim controls.

We focus not only on the protection of the physical environment and environmental well-being, but also on measures to protect human rights in the digital environment.

We continue to increase our efforts to counter violations of personality rights through social media while balancing these actions with freedom of expression.

My Great Nation,

The ninth and final goal of our Action Plan is to ensure the “HIGHEST LEVEL OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND SOCIAL AWARENESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS”.

We believe that the Action Plan can be fully implemented only on the basis of a human rights-based approach.



In this context, we are planning a number of activities firstly in the public sector and later in society at large to raise greater awareness on human rights.

We are working on ensuring a more human rights-based approach in social, political and cultural areas by focusing on people.

We are recognizing public officials who prioritise human rights and lead by example.

We are focusing more keenly on fundamental human rights in the training activities of law enforcement.

We are focusing on human rights in training activities for judges, prosecutors and lawyers by taking into consideration the case law of the Constitutional Court and the European Court of Human Rights.

We are ensuring that judges and prosecutors in lower courts who rendered the first decision and reviewed the case on appeal are informed about the decision of higher courts.

We are introducing internship opportunities to candidate judges, prosecutors and lawyers at the Constitutional Court.

We are focusing on “ethical principles on social media” and “impartiality” for judges and prosecutors as well as public officials.

We do not consider human rights awareness as a self-sufficient activity for the administration and focus on interacting with our citizens in this regard.

With this understanding, we are preparing the “Annual Report on Human Rights in Turkey” and sharing it publicly.

We will be using press spokespersons at courts more effectively to ensure that our citizens are accurately and swiftly informed about judicial proceedings and actions relating to human rights.

We are preparing national guidelines for business by taking into consideration the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

As with other issues, training lies at the core of human rights.

We are developing curriculum for primary and secondary education to raise awareness on human rights at an early age.

We are conducting a more effective assessment of knowledge on human rights law for candidates who are taking exams such as the Public Personnel Selection Examination, Entrance Exams to the Legal Profession and Exams for Candidate Judges and Prosecutors.

We believe that these actions will help grow our human resources who have greater awareness and information regarding human rights.

Enhancing the quality of education in law is very important to achieve these goals.

We had reduced the required ranking to enter law faculties from the top 190,000 to the top 125,000 and later to 100,000 in the context of the Judicial Reform Strategy.



In the same context, we are extending education in faculties of law to five years.

We are also reviewing available positions in law faculties with a view to enhancing the quality of education.

We are ensuring that vocational schools for justice provide only formal education.

We are developing our cooperation with international human rights mechanisms as an important part of our efforts to ensure the “highest level of administrative and social awareness on human rights”.

For this purpose, we are considering the signing and ratification of international conventions and additional protocols on human rights to which we are not yet a party to.

In this context, we are establishing a “Research Institute on Law”.

This institute will follow all international developments on human rights law and develop new policy suggestions by taking into consideration social expectations and needs.

Furthermore, we are preparing a “Human Rights Research Scholarship” to encourage education on human rights in international human rights training programs.

My Great Nation,

I have summarized the Human Rights Action Plan which includes 9 goals, 50 objectives and 393 activities.

The Human Rights Action Plan is not a mere wish list.

All institutions of the state and the political establishment have a very important responsibility to make sure that the aspects included in this document are put in practice.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey will be responsible for deliberating on the legislative changes addressed in the Action Plan.

The Office of the President and relevant Ministries and institutions will oversee administrative actions required for the implementation of the plan.

There is no doubt that the constitution has a fundamental and key role for the implementation of the activities foreseen in the plan.

Therefore, the ultimate goal of the Action Plan is a new civilian constitution.

The constitution protects the will of the people and thereby safeguards rights and freedoms.

The constitution is a “social contract” determining the relationship between citizens and the state and defining fundamental rights.



In our country, constitutions have generally been introduced during coups.

The 1982 constitution in force was also enacted after a coup. Even though this constitution has been directly or indirectly amended a number of times by the will of the people, it still possesses the remnants of the dynamics from the original spirit with which it was prepared.

Each constitutional amendment has been a very valuable step towards a more robust democracy.

Nevertheless, the rather ambivalent style and the abundance of exceptions in the constitution with respect to freedoms still reflect its original spirit.

We have expressed many times the need for a new and civilian constitution that will fully reflect the national will and ensure our progress towards the future.

We have pursued this goal especially in the last 10 years.

However, our attempts in this regard were disrupted for various reasons.

We have not been able to present our nation with a new and civilian constitution based on rights and freedoms as we promised.

The distance that Turkey has covered in its democratic and economic development as well as rising social expectations make it imperative to introduce a new constitution without delay.

For this purpose, we presented our ideas for a new and civilian constitution to the nation in the last few weeks.

We believe that it is a historic responsibility on our part to ensure a new social contract on the basis of the supremacy of the national will as we prepare to celebrate the centennial of the Republic.

Therefore, a new constitution which prioritises the people in order to build the state is the ultimate goal of our Human Rights Action Plan.

The new constitution will be everyone's constitution.

For this purpose, we invite all political parties, institutions, civil society organizations, academia, everyone who has something to say about the future of our country to the process of preparing a new constitution.

As the People's Alliance, we will continue to work on this.

We hope to prepare a new constitution with the participation of other parties and sectors in society and hope to present it to our nation to pave the way for a brighter future for Turkey.

I would like to express my thanks in particular to Mr. Devlet Bahçeli, the distinguished chairman of the Nationalist Movement Party, and all who will contribute to the work on the new constitution.



With these thoughts, I would like to express my best wishes for the success of the Human Rights Action Plan and convey my thanks to everyone who was involved in its preparation. I greet you with affection and respect.