

# Footage of jailed Kurdish mayor of Mardin being brought to hospital causes anger

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Veteran Kurdish politician and mayor of Mardin province brought to hospital handcuffed, despite his serious health problems

ELAZIG – Footage of Ahmet Türk, the ousted and jailed Kurdish mayor of the southeastern province of Mardin, being brought to hospital in the eastern Kurdish province of Elazığ has stirred debate among social media users and politicians due to accusations he was restrained in handcuffs despite his severe health condition.

Many social media users shared the photo of Türk, 74, being escorted to hospital by gendarmerie officers, saying it was an inappropriate measure for a veteran politician with health issues.

“There’s no oppression you haven’t seen,” Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Istanbul MP Pervin Buldan tweeted regarding Türk. “But you’ve never abandoned your stance.”

Political opponents also reacted to the photo, with a ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) lawmaker from the southeastern province of Diyarbakır, Galip Ensarioğlu, saying the footage was disturbing.

“The way Ahmet Türk was treated wasn’t appropriate. The people should be treated according to their age and their position. Handcuffs are put on a person as a precaution if there is the possibility of escape. People who are not known to escape and who have a certain political identity should be treated by protecting their human dignity. The footage was disturbing,” Ensarioğlu said.

Former AKP lawmakers also echoed Ensarioğlu.

“I wish that incident hadn’t happened. It wasn’t right. Everyone is equal in the face of law, but it wasn’t right to handcuff Ahmet Türk, who is known to have been suffering from health problems and who has a political identity. In order to relieve the conscience of the society, he should’ve been tried without arrest all along,” former AKP Diyarbakır lawmaker Abdurahman Kurt said.

Another former AKP lawmaker from the eastern province of Batman, Mehmet Emin Ekmen, also said the public

agreed he should have been tried without arrest, given his age, health and political stance.

“The practices in jail should be carried out with kindness,” he said.

Another figure that reacted to the photo was main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP) Istanbul lawmaker Sezgin Tanrikulu, who said those responsible for the treatment were heartless.

“Ahmet Türk has been struggling with serious diseases in his heart. He has a heart, but those who created that photo don’t,” Tanrikulu tweeted.

Upon the increase in criticisms, the Elazığ Governor’s Office released a statement, saying Türk was not handcuffed.

“In no phase was Ahmet Türk handcuffed,” the statement released from the governor’s office read.

Kurdish mayor Türk was ousted on Nov. 17, 2016 by dictator Erdogan’s government, and was arrested on Nov. 24, 2016.

After being arrested, Türk was held in Silivri Prison in western Istanbul until being transferred to Kurdish city of Elazığ.

Türk’s lawyer Zeynep Öztoprak recently announced that Türk’s health report was missing.