



Mr Süleyman Soylu

Minister of Interior

Çamlıca Mahallesi 122. Sokak No:4

Yenimahalle, Ankara

Turkey

Cc : Directorate for Migration Issues, Foreigners department

19 May 2017

Dear Sir,

The undersigned press freedom and media organisations call on you to secure the immediate and unconditional release of French photojournalist Mathias Depardon, who has been detained for the past 11 days in southeastern Turkey.

Depardon was arrested on 8 May in Hasankeyf, in Batman province, while doing a report on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for *National Geographic* magazine. The following day, he was transferred to a detention centre operated by the Directorate for Migration Issues in Gaziantep, where he has remained ever since. On 11 May, ie. one week ago, the Directorate ordered to deport him. But the journalist has remained in detention ever since.

This is a very difficult situation for Depardon and his family to experience. The only communication channel he has with the outside world is his lawyer. The journalist is left without explanation about his continuing detention. This information vacuum makes us increasingly anxious, and we respectfully call on you to authorize French diplomats to visit him.

Aged 37, Depardon has been based in Turkey for the past five years. He is in the process of renewing his press card. The undersigned media organisations have all worked with him over the past few years and they all describe him as a highly professional and law-abiding journalist.

As confirmed by *National Geographic*, Depardon was in Hasankeyf on a professional assignment. We understand the legitimate security concerns in this area and we fully respect the law enforcement agencies' duty to protect Turkish citizens. But there is no ground to detain or deport Depardon. He should be allowed to continue his work in Turkey.

We thank you in advance for the attention you give to our request.

Sincerely,

- Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
- Association des Journalistes Professionnels (AJP, Belgique)
- Elle
- L'Express
- European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)
- Le Figaro
- L'Humanité
- Internazionale
- Libération
- Mediapart
- Le Monde
- National Geographic
- L'Obs
- Le Parisien
- Paris Match
- Polka
- Der Spiegel
- Society
- The Sunday Times Magazine
- Télérama
- Visa pour l'Image
- VSD