Dear Chief Public Prosecutor,
Aykut Çelik
Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor
Hacı Bayram Veli Mahallesi, Atatürk Bulvarı No:40
Sıhhiye/Ankara, 06050
Türkiye

I am writing to express my serious concern regarding the pretrial detention of at least 23 LGBTI rights defenders, including board and oversight committee members from Türkiye's foremost LGBTI rights organization KAOS GL, Janset Kalan, Nedime Erdoğan, Umut Derin and Selin Berghan as well as journalist Tuğba Tekerek. They were detained in the context of the "My Family is Safe" police operation targeting LGBTI people and organizations, which began on 12 September. They have been deprived of their liberty

in connection with their work as board members and, in the case of Tuğba Tekerek, her journalistic work.

The abovementioned human rights defenders and journalist were questioned and remanded in pretrial detention on charges of 'obscenity' and 'violating the Law on Associations.' The decision to deprive them of their liberty pending prosecution is arbitrary, punitive and discriminatory. The accusation of obscenity relates to drawings alleged to be present on KAOS GL's website and to be accessible for children even though the website has been inaccessible in Türkiye since June 2025. The journalist Tuğba Tekerek remains in pretrial detention for allegedly "being responsible for the organisation's Instagram account," which she is not. In any event, managing or contributing to an LGBTI organization's social media account is a legitimate exercise of freedom of expression

and association and cannot justify deprivation of liberty.

LGBTI rights organizations have reported alleged instances of physical and verbal abuse, degrading strip searches and threats inadequate healthcare and medication, and inadequate food while in pretrial detention, raising serious concerns about the well-being and safety of those detained.

I respectfully urge your office to drop the charges against the human rights defenders and journalist and ensure their immediate release. Pending their release, they must be held in conditions that meet international standards

and all allegations of ill-treatment must be effectively investigated. I further urge you to ensure that their rights to freedom of expression and association are fully protected in line with Türkiye's obligations under international human rights law. I also call

for the release of all others detained during the “My Family is Safe” operation solely for exercising their rights or because of who they are.

Yours sincerely,