

Harbert man arrested by Dept. of Homeland Security

Harbert, MI - Last Wednesday Ibrahim Parlak, a Berrien County man, was taken into custody by the Department of Homeland Security because authorities say he's a threat to national security. Friends and neighbors say he's no threat, and they're demanding justice.

Parlak is a Kurdish native of Turkey who now lives and works in Berrien County. Soon after his arrival in the United States, Parlak opened up a restaurant, Cafe Gulistan, in Harbert, Michigan.

At issue is Parlak's past alleged connections to what's now a Kurdish terrorist organization, the PKK. In the late 80's Parlak fought for Kurdish rights in Turkey and ended up in prison there because of associations with what is now considered a terrorist organization.

Parlak was imprisoned in Turkey, but was granted political asylum by the United States after he got out. Now his case is being re-visited by the United States.

Parlak's friends are so disturbed by his arrest they've turned his restaurant into a rallying point for supporters.

... friends and family say they're afraid past political activism is being misinterpreted as terrorism.

Martin Dzuris, the Parlak family spokesperson, says, "Ok, we give you political asylum and we'll protect you, and then we change our mind? And now we're going to send you back to the country where you were tortured and persecuted? It's very disturbing."

Michele Gazzolo, a friend of Parlak's, says, "This document from a military court where he wasn't even present, he didn't have a lawyer, it was a new judgment handed down on old evidence. We just want to make sure that in the current political climate, this doesn't get swept under the rug."

Parlak has a bond hearing in immigration court Tuesday in Detroit.

Dozens of supporters are planning to be there to help plead his case.