

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Turkey: End pre-trial detention of Özgür Gündem guest editors**

Amnesty International calls on the Turkish authorities to release immediately and unconditionally writer and activist Ahmet Nesin, Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) President Dr Şebnem Korur Fincancı and Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Turkey representative Erol Önderoğlu.

The three activists were today remanded in pre-trial detention on charges of “making propaganda for a terrorist organization” due to their participation in a solidarity campaign in which they acted as one day guest editors for the Kurdish daily newspaper *Özgür Gündem*. The solidarity campaign was initiated in response to the sustained judicial harassment faced by Kurdish journalists in Turkey. 37 out of 44 guest editors, including many well-known journalists, writers and activists, are facing prosecution for their involvement in the campaign. The three activists are the first to be remanded in pre-trial detention.

Amnesty International views the detentions as legally baseless, targeting the activists for their acts of solidarity with Kurdish journalists in Turkey. Dr Şebnem Korur Fincancı and Erol Önderoğlu are both long-time prominent human rights defenders in Turkey. Dr Şebnem Korur Fincancı on behalf of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey has recently spoken out regarding human rights abuses in police and military operations in the south-east of Turkey while Erol Önderoğlu on behalf of Reporters Without Borders and Bianet independent news network, has reported on prosecutions and other threats against journalists across the political spectrum. Amnesty International believes that they have been targeted for detention due to their broader work as human rights defenders.

The Istanbul 1<sup>st</sup> Criminal Court of Peace issued the pre-trial detention order today following a request by the prosecutor. Their detentions are the latest episode in the Turkish authorities’ assault on critical civil society aided by a compliant judiciary.

This case is one of countless investigations under Turkey’s anti-terror laws targeting dissenting voices in civil society. Prosecutions for “making propaganda for a terrorist organization” have been routinely brought against individuals expressing peaceful but dissenting views regarding military operations in the south-east of Turkey. These latest detentions come following statements by government officials criticizing the work of human rights organizations in the south-east of Turkey.

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