

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PUBLIC STATEMENT

AI Index: EUR 44/4463/2016
16 July 2016

Turkey: Rights must be respected in aftermath of failed coup

Turkey is still reeling from a night of violence in which a coup attempt from within the country's armed forces was defeated. According to the authorities, 161 people were killed opposing the coup attempt while more than 100 coup plotters were killed. By mid-afternoon today, 2839 military personnel had been detained on suspicion of taking part in the attempted coup. Violence was centred in Ankara, where the Parliament building was subjected to aerial bombardment and in Turkey's biggest city, Istanbul. Deaths were reported as members of the public confronted armed soldiers.

Turkey has a history of military coups with devastating consequences for human rights. Turkey is still living with the scars of the last military coup, of 12 September 1980. The three years of repressive military rule that followed saw hundreds of thousands of arbitrary detentions and widespread torture, extrajudicial killings and 50 executions.

The Turkish authorities have averted the threat of such a tragedy repeating itself. The coup attempt was thwarted partly by ordinary people taking to the streets and uniting to counter the coup threat. The full circumstances of the coup attempt and the violence that followed it must be effectively investigated and all those responsible brought to justice in fair trials.

A number of government officials and ruling party representatives have spoken in favour of reinstating the death penalty, itself a tool of past military rulers. This regressive step should be avoided, as should further restrictions on legitimate dissent.

The Turkish authorities should instead be looking to strengthen respect for the rule of law and human rights and the independence and effectiveness of institutions, such as the judiciary, that are essential to upholding them.

End/