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## PUBLIC STATEMENT

### TURKEY

#### **Journalist Rag\_p Duran should be released immediately**

Amnesty International called on the Turkish authorities to release immediately journalist, Rag\_p Duran, who was imprisoned on 16 June simply for writing an article in 1994 about an illegal organization.

On 12 June Amnesty International wrote to Mr Oltan Sungurlu, the Minister of Justice, expressing concern about Rag\_p Duran's impending imprisonment. The contents of the letter was made public at a farewell ceremony held for Rag\_p Duran in front of the Journalist's Association in Cagaloglu before he left for Saray Prison near Tekirda\_. With remission, Rag\_p Duran will serve seven months and 15 days' imprisonment.

Rag\_p Duran was convicted on 19 December 1995 for "propaganda for a terrorist organization" under the Anti-Terror Law after writing an article entitled "*Apo 91 / Öcalan 94*". The article was published in the newspaper *Özgür Gündem (Free Agenda)* on 12 April 1994.

As the article does not advocate violence, Amnesty International considers Rag\_p Duran to be a prisoner of conscience and demands his immediate and unconditional release. His imprisonment violates his right to freedom of expression -- as safeguarded in Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms to which Turkey is a State Party.

Amnesty International is disappointed to note that while members of the Turkish Government talk publicly of broadening freedom of expression, more prisoners of conscience are arrested and imprisoned.

On 5 December 1997 a Turkish press agency, UBA, reported a government minister as announcing that "freedom of expression will be secured", and that amendments of the Anti-Terror Law and Articles 159, 311 and 312 of the Turkish Penal Code (TPC) were being planned. However, writer and biologist Edip Polat was imprisoned on 5 April under Article 159 of the TPC, lawyer E\_ber Ya\_murdereli was imprisoned on 1 June under Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law, and writer Haluk Gerger was imprisoned on 26 January under Article 7 of the Anti-Terror Law because of what they chose to say in public and write. Scores of members of the Aczmendi movement are also held in prison because of what they chose to wear in public -- turban and cloak.

Amnesty International has called for the unconditional release of all these prisoners.  
ENDS.../