

12 July 2000

Further information on UA 200/00 (EUR 44/34/00, 6 July 2000) - Fear of torture or ill-treatment

TURKEY Political prisoners in Burdur Prison

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All the prisoners involved in the 5 July mutiny have now been transferred to other prisons.

Two days after the mutiny was put down, 41 of the prisoners involved were moved to other prisons. Eighteen others were kept for some days in Burdur, reportedly in cells knee-deep in water mixed with sewage, without beds or other furniture. They were reportedly beaten and otherwise ill-treated, and beaten on the soles of the feet (a form of torture called *falaka*).

The prisoners have given a detailed account of the events of the mutiny. They claim that they barricaded themselves into the wards between 8 and 8.30am on 5 July, fearing for their lives, when they saw gendarmerie, counter-insurgency special forces and commandos taking up positions around the wards and on the roofs. The security forces reportedly threw smoke bombs, tear gas and nerve gas into the wards and started to break down the walls with bulldozers. Some prisoners were burned and all were choking from the fumes. The prisoners say the security forces attacked them with iron poles, truncheons, roof tiles and stones, dragging unconscious prisoners out of the wards with long-handled hooks. They reportedly trampled on prisoners who had collapsed, and sexually assaulted unconscious women prisoners and kicked them in the groin until they bled.

They picked out certain prisoners for especially severe beatings with iron poles, breaking bones in their arms and feet. Some of these prisoners were thrown from the second-floor wards, breaking ribs, feet and arms. Two prison warders are alleged to have anally raped a woman prisoner with a truncheon and vaginally raped her with a fluorescent lamp tube.

Veli Saç\_l\_k, whose arm was crushed when the walls of the wards were bulldozed, is reported to be in a critical condition in Isparta State Hospital after having the arm amputated.

A prisoner named Sad\_k Türk reportedly has a fractured skull and is in a serious condition in Antalya Hospital.

More than 30 lawyers representing the prisoners, from the Bar Associations of Izmir, Istanbul, Ankara and Antalya, came to Burdur on 5 July to try to meet their clients and make sure they were safe. They were obstructed by the petty excuses and delays created by both senior and junior officials. Three of them were allowed to be present briefly while the prosecutor took statements from their clients in the prison on 6 July. They reportedly heard screams as attacks on other prisoners continued. The following day the lawyers were not allowed into the prison while the prosecutor took statements from the other prisoners.

On 8 July they were told that 41 of the prisoners had been moved, and they were finally permitted to meet the 18 who remained. They noted that all the prisoners had signs of severe injuries on the visible parts of their bodies, and had difficulty breathing and speaking. Their clothes were torn, and stained with mud and blood.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please continue to send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, German or your own language:**

- asking for information about the condition of the injured prisoners and urging that they receive any necessary medical treatment;
- expressing concern at the delay in allowing access to lawyers and urging that lawyers and relatives continue to be given access to prisoners;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the events of 5 July in Burdur Prison, and asking to be told the result of any investigation;
- reminding the Turkish government of its obligations under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Turkey is a state party, which states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."
- urgently calling on the Turkish authorities to ensure that prisoners are managed by prison staff under the authority of the Justice Ministry, and not brought into contact with police and gendarmes.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Justice

Professor Hikmet Sami Türk

Adalet Bakan\_

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**Faxes: + 90 312 418 5667**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

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and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 23 August 2000.