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TURKEY: SHOCKING REPORTS OF TORTURE OF JUVENILES IN DETENTION AS TRIAL OF 16 MOSTLY JUVENILE DEFENDANTS REOPENS

As the trial of 16 -- mostly juvenile -- defendants reopens today, Amnesty International is calling on the Turkish Government to investigate fully and impartially allegations that all the defendants were severely tortured.

The defendants -- who are mostly teenage students -- were charged with membership of or having links with the illegal armed organization, the *Revolutionary People's Liberation Front*, DHKP-C.

"We are alarmed at receiving an increasing number of reports that juveniles have been tortured in police custody," Amnesty International said today.

During their detention between 26 December 1995 and 5 January 1996 at Manisa Police Headquarters, police reportedly blindfolded the defendants, stripped them naked, hosed them with cold water and subjected them to electric shocks including to their genitalia. Police raped the male detainees with truncheons and squeezed their testicles. Female detainees were subjected to forced gynaecological tests and were threatened with rape, virginity tests and defenestration.

A 14-year-old male defendant gave the following account: *I had to undress. (...) . They asked questions that were nothing to do with me; when I said I did not know, they twisted my testicles. They said things like: 'That's it, your manhood is gone'(..). Four of them held me by the hands and arms and gave electric shocks to my right thumb, to my sexual organs, to my arms and to my stomach. (..) Afterwards I had no feeling in my right foot and sexual organ.*

The juveniles' torture testimonies are supported by medical reports from the hospitals where they were treated during their detention. A 17-year-old female had to be transferred to hospital, because of vaginal bleeding following electric shocks applied to her genitals. A 16-year-old (who is still under arrest) was recently transferred to Izmir State Hospital. Released juveniles are receiving medical treatment from the Turkish Human Rights Foundation.

Sabri Ergül, member of parliament for the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), gave the following account of an unannounced visit at Manisa Police Headquarters: *I heard a cry and opened the door of the next room to find out what was going on. The young people were there, they were blindfolded and some of them were naked.*

Reports of torture of the 16 defendants have produced an outcry in the Turkish media and general public during the past months.

Amnesty International is urgently calling on the Turkish authorities to ensure prompt, impartial and thorough investigations into these serious torture allegations and bring those found responsible to justice without delay.

Amnesty International also closely monitors trials of suspected torturers of children. The trial against police officers who reportedly subjected 13-year-old Abdullah Salman to electric shocks at li Police Headquarters in Istanbul between 7 and 9 November 1994 is still pending. Twelve-year-old Halil Ibrahim Okkal_'s arm was broken while in detention at narl_ Police Station on 27 November 1995 in Izmir and a trial has recently been opened.

Döne Talun, who was only 12 years old when she was severely beaten and subjected to electric shocks, was upset when in January 1996 the prosecutor issued a decision not to prosecute: *"How could they let them go after what they have done to me?"*.

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