

**PUBLIC**

**AI Index: EUR 44/73/00**

**UA 385/00**      **Fear of torture or ill-treatment/fear of killings/fear of arbitrary detentions** 20 December 2000

**TURKEY**      **Political prisoners on hunger strike**

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Turkish security forces stormed 20 prisons on 19 December at about 4.30am, to end hunger strikes by political prisoners. At least 20 prisoners, according to some sources over 30 prisoners, and two gendarmes have reportedly died in the course of the operation, which is still under way in two of the prisons, Ümraniye and Çanakkale.

More than 1,200 political prisoners have been on hunger strike since 20 October, in protest at plans to move them to new prisons where they will be housed in small cells, rather than dormitories that hold up to 60 prisoners. They think that they will be locked up alone or in small groups in these new prisons, and therefore isolated and at greater risk of assault or torture. Some 200 of the hunger strikers were on “death fast” (taking water, but no sugar), and many of them were reportedly close to death at the time of the raids.

The Justice Minister reportedly stated that “at least 16 prisoners died, most of whom set themselves on fire.” He did not say how the other prisoners had died.

The following prisoners are reported to have died: in Çanakkale Prison, Fidan Kal\_en (f) and Dursun Önder; in Bursa Prison, Murat Özdemir, Mesut Örs (disputed) and Ali İhsan Özkan; in Çank\_r\_ Prison\_rfan Ortakç\_ and possibly Hasan Güngörmez.

In Ümraniye Prison Ahmet \_bili was reportedly shot by gendarmes after he had set himself on fire and walked towards the soldiers. There is also an unconfirmed report that another prisoner in Ümraniye died as the result of beatings. Some prisoners were reportedly killed by the security forces in Bayrampa\_a Prison. The Justice Minister confirmed that 12 died there, but the cause of death could not be verified. Officials were quoted on Wednesday morning saying that the teargas used on Tuesday’s raid was still too thick to allow a full search in the prison. The names of prisoners who reportedly died in Bayrampa\_a are: Yazgülü Güder (Gülseren) Öztürk (f), Serdar Karaçelik, Halil Önder, Fethi (\_efi) Nur Tezgel, Seyhan (Seyman) Do\_an, Nilüfer Alcan (f), Gülser Tuzcu, Ayd\_n Hambayat and Özlem Ercan (f).

At least 78 prisoners are said to be injured. In Bayrampa\_a Prison Ali Ekber Düzova and six other prisoners have been hospitalised reportedly with gunshot wounds inflicted by gendarmes. In Bart\_n Prison tear gas was used and 26 prisoners are reported to have been hospitalised. At Gebze Prison several prisoners reportedly suffered serious injuries, including gunshot wounds and skull fractures.

According to official sources, inmates in Bayrampa\_a, Çanakkale and Ümraniye resisted the security forces violently.

At least 500 people protesting against the storming of the prisons were reportedly detained, 200 of them in Ankara and 90 in Istanbul.

A number of representatives of non-violent organizations, human rights defenders, politicians and trade unionists have also been arrested.

Police have raided the Human Rights Association (\_HD) branches in \_zmir, Van, Istanbul and Konya. At the Van branch relatives of prisoners who had staged a hunger strike in the office were detained, and later released, and the office was sealed by the police.

At 4.30pm on 19 December the authorities started to transfer prisoners to the newly constructed F-Type prison in Sincan, near Ankara. Transfers of several hundred prisoners, reportedly including political leaders, were also reported from numerous other prisons to F-Type prisons in Sincan, Edirne and Kocaeli. The Justice Minister had repeatedly promised that transfer of prisoners to the F-Type prisons had been postponed. Yet on 20 December he said that the prisons that had been stormed on 19 December had been destroyed, and therefore it was essential to move prisoners to F-type prisons.

Amnesty International has written to the Justice Minister expressing concern about a possible regime of isolation in the new F-Type prisons which might amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and which would facilitate torture and ill-treatment. Amnesty International has urged the authorities to ensure that prisoners can associate with each other each day in areas for common use.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language urging the authorities to:**

- ensure that security officers refrain from the use of excessive force and torture or ill-treatment of prisoners as a matter of urgency;
- initiate a full, independent and impartial investigation into all deaths and injuries during the prison raids, the results of which should be made public;
- suspend those alleged to be responsible from their duties pending the outcome of the investigation;
- allow victims' lawyers to observe autopsies and visit their clients in prison or hospital, while ensuring that the injured receive appropriate medical treatment;
- ensure that detainees are not tortured or ill-treated.

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**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

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and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

**Please could appeal writers in EU member countries also send copies to their Minister of Foreign Affairs.**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 January 2001.