

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: EUR 44/87/91
Distr: CO/GR

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2 July 1991

£TURKEY: @Arrest of Human Rights Association Members in Ankara - Update

On 12 April 1991, the Turkish Parliament (TBMM) passed a new law, the so-called "Anti-Terror Law" and at the same time repealed several articles of the Turkish Penal Code, including Article 142/3. This is the article under which the three Human Rights Association members, Vedat Ayd_n, Ahmet Zeki Okçuo_lu and Mustafa Özer are being tried in Ankara State Security Court.

Repeal of the article means that the three defendants will have to be acquitted eventually. However, since there are many trials which now have to come to an end, it may take some time until this trial is concluded.

Meanwhile, in the early hours of 18 June, at 2.10, an explosive device detonated in Mustafa Özer's car which was parked in front of his house in Diyarbak_r. According to reports received, the explosion was a very powerful one, leaving an 80cm crater in the concrete of the road and causing extensive glass damage in the neighbourhood. Nobody was injured in the blast. People with experience in the arms industry thought the total destruction of the car looked like the effect of military explosives. However, the police have informed the Diyarbak_r Prosecutor that they so far have not been able to establish the type of explosive used. It is not known who planted the device and what the motives behind the bombing are.

Mustafa Özer is a lawyer and known Human Rights activist. He was for some time president of Diyarbak_r Bar Association and a board member of the Human Rights Association in Diyarbak_r. After the military coup of September 1980 he defended many clients in political trials before military courts.

Since this incident two further bombings have occurred: On the night of 25 June a bomb destroyed the office in Diyarbakir of the Turkish Human Rights Association. In the morning of 2 July a bomb exploded in the car of S_dd_k Tan in Batman shortly after he had parked it outside his shop. S_dd_k Tan, as well as his son and a friend sustained injuries in the explosion. S_dd_k Tan is a board member of the Batman branch of the Turkish Human Rights Association; he was detained in July 1990 and held incommunicado for some 23 days before being charged with giving assistance and shelter to Kurdish guerrillas. The outcome of his trial is not known.