

EXTERNAL

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FURTHER INFORMATION ON MEDICAL LETTER-WRITING ACTION

**Şedat KARAAĞAÇ
TURKEY**

(See EUR 44/114/90 - 4 July 1990)

Amnesty International has learned of the release of Şedat Karaagaç, a 35-year-old political prisoner suffering from malignant melanoma whose prognosis is said to be poor. He was detained at the time of the extension of martial law throughout Turkey in September 1980, charged with violent activity for the Turkish Revolutionary Communist Party and sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment.

His melanoma was diagnosed at the end of November 1989 following biopsy after he had noticed signs on his back around the site of a mole which had been torn during ill-treatment. This had occurred when he and others were beaten on transfer from Eskisehir to Aydin Prison, both Special Type Prisons used to house political detainees and prisoners. The transfer took place in order to end a hunger-strike in Eskisehir Prison which was then in its 35th day. The prisoners were sent to two separate prisons - Aydin and Nazilli. They were transferred against medical advice, chained together in very poorly ventilated vans on a journey which took over 15 hours. Two died shortly after arrival at Aydin; autopsy revealed that their deaths were due to dehydration.

On arrival at Aydin prison, several of the prisoners are reported to have been beaten and ill-treated by prison warders after an argument broke out over the need for medical attention. Şedat Karaagaç stated in a press interview that the beatings had lasted for several hours and that he himself had been stripped naked and dragged across a concrete floor by one leg, causing abrasions to the face, head and back.

His lawyers appealed for his release on health grounds following the diagnosis of malignant melanoma. Although the Turkish Penal Code of Criminal Procedures provides for the suspension of sentence where a prisoner's life is endangered, this was at first refused by the courts. He was released on 2 October 1990 following subsequent appeals to a higher court.

Thank you to all those who appealed.