
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 16/94

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 26 JANUARY 1994

AI INDEX: NWS 11/16/94
DISTR: SC/PO
NO OF WORDS:746

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - TURKEY

PLEASE NOTE: I have not heard back from most of you about whether you need hotel bookings for the press officers meeting on 19, 20 & 21. I also need to have confirmation that you are coming (even if you don't need hotel bookings), so that I can organize the food for lunch on each day of the meeting. Please send faxes/e-mails or telephone asap to finalize this. Thanks, Paula.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

UN Peacekeeping operations - 26 January - SEE NEWS SERVICES 170 AND 05/94

Burundi - 27 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 05/94

UK - 9 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

Kuwait - 24 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Zaire - 2 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Women - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

Saudi Arabia - 31 March more details to follow

Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56-57/93

South Africa - 23 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 05/94

News Service 16/94

AI INDEX: EUR 44/WU 04/1994

26 January 1994

TURKEY: FOREIGN NATIONALS SUBJECTED TO CRUEL, INHUMAN AND DEGRADING TREATMENT

On 25 January Pierre Sanó, Secretary General of Amnesty International, wrote to the Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Çiller concerning the ill-treatment of foreign nationals arrested in operations against illegal immigrants on the streets of Istanbul. Amnesty International has received reports that hundreds of foreign nationals, most from Africa and the West Indies, who were detained for infringements of immigration law, have been held incommunicado for long periods in inhuman and degrading conditions in various police stations throughout Istanbul.

A detainee who was held in the Second Branch of Istanbul police headquarters during October 1993 told Amnesty International that he saw dozens of prisoners kept in filthy conditions without proper food or sanitary arrangements, several of whom were sick and had received no medical treatment. Detainees who had been held in Aksaray police station in November reported that they had seen and talked to six Africans in an adjacent cell, where they had already been held for 15 days in a space estimated to be 2.4 metres square. Due to lack of proper sanitary arrangements, they were forced to excrete into plastic bags, and since toilet paper was not available they had to wipe themselves with their hands and in turn wipe the excrement on the cell walls to clean their hands. Reportedly, two of the men were HIV positive and two had serious bronchial complaints. None of the detainees about whom Amnesty International is informed had been charged with any offence - nor had they been given any access to legal counsel. It appears that the principal consistent factor in these people's detention was their skin colour.

On 23 October a group of about 150 such prisoners were taken to a UN Refugee Camp in Sivas province, and then to a former refugee camp in Silopi, in __rnak province of southeastern Turkey, close to the border with northern Iraq. They have been told that they will be held until they make arrangements for their own exit from Turkey by air - something which most are not in a position to accomplish. A number of prisoners have escaped and there are now about 80 left in the camp in Silopi, living in tents without proper heating or food (apart from whatever the prisoners are able to buy for themselves). The latest information from the camp, which is in the middle of a region where there are almost daily clashes between guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and government troops, is very disquieting. According to reports, Francos Marcos, a Kenyan citizen, was crushed by an armoured car which intervened in a heated but non-violent dispute between security forces and the detainees as to the siting of new accommodation. Francos Marcos suffered a broken pelvis, and damage to his kidneys and genitals and is understood to be still in a serious condition in hospital in Diyarbak_r.

Amnesty International has urged the Turkish authorities to initiate urgent investigation of the circumstances of these detained foreign nationals, and to ensure that they are not subjected to conditions which amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or conditions which could put their health in danger. The organization has also urged that regular inspections of criminal detention facilities be carried out, to ensure that criminal detainees are not being held in overcrowded or insanitary cells, and that their rights, under Turkish law, of access to legal counsel and examination by a doctor of their own choice are being observed.

ENDS/