

URGENT ACTION

BILL THREATENING HUMAN RIGHTS PASSED

On 27 March Turkey's Parliament passed a bill endorsing a range of security reforms which will give the country's police forces broad and dangerous new powers to detain people and use firearms to quell dissent.

The government bill entitled "Law amending the Law on powers and duties of the police, other laws and decrees" but widely referred to as the "domestic security package" was brought before the Parliament on 17 February and debated since. Despite widespread criticism from opposition political parties, human rights organisations, lawyers' associations and other civil society groups the bill was passed on 27 March.

The bill facilitates the already widespread practice of arbitrary detentions during protests and paves the way for further human rights violations including politically motivated criminal investigations and violations of the right to life. Provisions on the use of police force contradict international human rights standards, since under the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, the use of lethal weapons should only be justified to protect people against imminent threats to life or serious injury and only when other less lethal means have failed. It also contains vaguely worded provisions giving powers to the police to detain individuals without a judicial oversight. Additionally, other provisions erode the independence of prosecutors and the obligation to ensure that they can carry out their work without undue interference.

The timing of the bill is seen as especially contentious as it will allow it to come into law before the dissolution of Parliament on 5 April ahead of parliamentary elections on 7 June. It will enter into force after the President signs it into law – a mere formality that is expected to take place soon.

Amnesty International will continue monitoring the situation closely and action will be taken accordingly.

No further action is currently requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the first update of UA 42/15. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR44/1041/2015/en/>

For further information, please refer to the press release issued on 27 March
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/articles/news/2015/03/turkey-gives-police-broad-powers-to-repress-dissent/>

Further information on UA: 42/15 Index: EUR 44/1346/2015 Issue Date: 30 March 2015

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