

PUBLIC

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To: Health professionals  
From: Medical Office / Europe sub-regional team  
Date: 3 February 1998

### **MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION**

**Hasan ÖZGÜN**

**TURKEY**

#### **Keywords**

Theme: ill-health

Profession/association: journalist

#### **Summary**

Amnesty International is concerned at reports that the prisoner Hasan Özgün, former Diyarbakir editor for the (now closed) daily newspaper *Özgür Gündem*, is suffering from a number of health problems, including internal bleeding, stomach ulcers, shortness of breath and dizziness, and that he has been denied medical attention by the authorities at Aydin State Hospital. Hasan Özgün is currently serving a twelve-and-a-half year prison sentence in Aydin Prison.

#### **Recommended action**

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below

- saying that you are writing about Hasan Özgün;
- expressing concern at his reported state of health and urging that proper investigation of his medical condition be undertaken and the findings acted upon;
- seeking information about any treatment he may currently be receiving;
- urging that his well-being and proper medical care be guaranteed, including by transfer to a suitable alternative institution if necessary.

#### **Addresses:**

*President*

President Süleyman Demirel

Office of the President

Cumhurba\_kanl\_\_\_\_

06100 Ankara

Fax: +90 312 468 5026

Salutation: Your Excellency

*Minister of Justice:*

Mr Oltan Sungurlu

Minister of Justice

Adalet Bakanligi

06659 Ankara, Turkey

Fax: +90 312 417 3954

+90 312 418 5667

Salutation: Dear Minister

*General Director of Prisons*

*c/o Ministry of Justice:*

Mr Hüseyin Turgut

Ceza ve Tevkifevleri Genel Müdürü,

Adalet Bakanl

06659 Ankara, Turkey

Fax: +90 312 425 4066

+90 312 425 4819

Salutation: Dear Director

**Copies to:**

*Turkish Medical Association*

**Türk Tabipleri Birli\_i**

**Turkish Medical Association**

**Mithatpasa Cad. 62/15-18**

**06420 Yenisehir**

**Ankara, Turkey**

*Turkish Human Rights Foundation*

S\_raselviler

Billurcu Sok. 32/2

Taksim 80060

Istanbul, Turkey

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**Hasan ÖZGÜN**  
**TURKEY**

Amnesty International is concerned at reports that the prisoner Hasan Özgün, former Diyarbakir editor of the now-closed daily newspaper *Özgür Gündem*, suffers from a number of significant health problems, including internal bleeding, shortness of breath and dizziness, and has been denied medical attention by the authorities at Aydin State Hospital after being referred there by the prison authorities. Hasan Özgün is currently serving a prison term of 12½ years in Aydin E-type Prison for membership of the illegal Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) following his conviction in an unfair trial in 1993.

On 28 October 1997, Hasan Özgün was brought to Aydin State Hospital to receive treatment. According to Hasan Özgün, he was examined in the basement of the hospital while still in handcuffs and in the presence of police officers; he was apparently given no opportunity to explain his symptoms to the examining doctor. The hospital board subsequently issued a report stating that he was "fit". Hasan Özgün is believed to have undertaken a number of hunger strikes during his imprisonment.

Hasan Özgün was arrested during a police raid on the offices of *Özgür Gündem* in Diyarbakir on 9 December 1993. He was later charged and convicted of membership of the PKK, an illegal organization, under Article 168/2 of the Turkish Penal Code, and sentenced in January 1996 to 12½ years' imprisonment. According to observers who attended the court hearings, his trial failed to meet international standards for fair trial.

Amnesty International has had long-standing concerns about the access of Turkish prisoners to prompt and adequate medical care. Prison infirmaries are under-staffed and under-equipped and when prison doctors recommend that a prisoner be transferred to a hospital for treatment, prison warders frequently impede such transfers and hospitals may refuse to take the prisoner.

In a speech made in January 1998 at the opening of a clinic in Bak\_rköy, the Health Minister, Halil Ibrahim Özsoy, said that of 706 hospitals in Turkey, only 204 had special security sections for prisoners, providing a total of 800 beds. This was insufficient, he said. Justice Minister Oltan Sungurlu, speaking at the same opening, said, "I hope Turkey will institute better [human rights] standards, both in prisons and at the courts." (*Turkish Daily News*, 20 January 1998)