

TURKEY: JOURNALIST BEATEN TO DEATH IN POLICE CUSTODY- CONCLUSION OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL INVESTIGATION

Two Amnesty International delegates, a lawyer and a former police officer, travelled to Turkey from 11 to 14 January to investigate the death of journalist Metin Göktepe on 8 January 1996 in Istanbul.

The two delegates who spoke with Turkish authorities and eye-witnesses stated: "Metin Göktepe was found dead in a Sport Centre which was at the time being used by the police as detention centre. We expect the Turkish authorities, therefore, to give a complete account of their findings into his death."

The detention of Metin Göktepe on 8 January at about 12 noon in the Alibeyköy district of Istanbul was witnessed by fellow journalists who gave detailed testimony. Metin Göktepe was detained while covering the funeral of two political prisoners who were beaten to death on 4 January at Ümraniye prison.

According to official accounts, on 8 January 1,035 person were detained in connection with the funeral; 705 of them were transferred to Eyüp Sports Centre. The Eyüp Sport Centre is surrounded by a 3.5m high wall. Witnesses reported to Amnesty International that detainees in the Eyüp Sport Centre and in the Alibeyköy police station were severely beaten.

The Eyüp Public Prosecutor confirmed that Metin Göktepe's body was found on 8 January at 8.30 pm near a buffet in the Eyüp Sport Centre. The Sport Centre was used by police as detention centre until 11.30 pm that day.

According to medical experts, Metin Göktepe was clearly beaten to death. The autopsy report of 9 January by the Forensic Medicine Department at Istanbul University revealed that Metin Göktepe's death "resulted from subdural and subarachnoidal brain haemorrhage associated with trauma to the head from a blunt object and internal bleeding".

On 16 January the State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights, Adnan Ekmen, informed the press: "The body of Metin Göktepe was found inside the Sport Centre and not as first suggested in a park nearby. His bag was also found in the Sport Centre. [...] It seems clear that Metin Göktepe died there."

The Turkish authorities are currently conducting investigations into the death of Metin Göktepe. Amnesty International is calling on the Turkish authorities further to investigate fully and impartially the reported ill-treatment of detainees by police on 8 January.

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