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Turkey: Negotiations a welcome step towards resolving human rights crisis

Amnesty International welcomes the fact that the Prime Minister met with a number of intellectuals in an attempt to resolve amicably the current stand off between protestors and the authorities over the occupation on Gezi Park which has entered its third week.

The stand off relates to the protestors' determination to carry on their peaceful protest until their demands have been met and the government authorities' insistence that the demonstrations must end.

The Taksim Platform demands that the space remains as a park, police violence ends and the rights to freedom of expression and assembly are respected. They also call for public officials seen as responsible for abuses against peaceful protestors to be removed from their posts.

Amnesty International sees the negotiations as a welcome first step taken by the authorities following weeks of hostile statements aimed at the protestors, denial of their right to peaceful protest and the use of excessive police force against peaceful protestors. Amnesty International notes however, that even as negotiations were going ahead last night, police in Ankara were using force against peaceful protestors in the city.

Amnesty International calls on the authorities to engage in a continuing dialogue with civil society groups and in particular to ensure that they meet with people who are genuinely representative of the diverse groups of protestors.

Amnesty International renews its call on the authorities to respect the right of the protestors to continue their peaceful demonstrations and to commit to an end to all abusive use of force by police against the demonstrators in Istanbul and elsewhere.

Amnesty International also welcomes the fact that the Prime Minister has reportedly committed to ensure that abuses by police will be investigated and those responsible brought to justice, in marked contrast to his earlier statements calling for even greater use of force against demonstrators.