

EXTERNAL

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*MEDICAL CONCERN*

**@Gülderen Baran  
£TURKEY**

Amnesty International has recently received information about the situation of Gülderen Baran, a 22-year-old political prisoner who was allegedly badly tortured in police custody in August 1995, leaving her arms disabled. She was arrested on 4 August 1995 and held for 13 days at Istanbul Police Headquarters where she is reported to have been particularly severely tortured during the first eight days of her detention. According to her statement, she was beaten, hosed naked with cold pressurized water, kept blindfolded and deprived of sleep, sexually molested and repeatedly hung by the arms. She states that she was hung in two different positions - with her arms attached to a beam and outstretched in a crucifix position and, also, by her wrists bound behind her back.

As a result of the repeated hanging, she states that both her arms were dislocated and she suffered neurological damage leaving her with a loss of strength and little movement in the arms. In a medical report dated 11 December 1995 - four months after her torture - it is noted that "minimal functional movement has begun in the patient's left hand, but her right arm and hand are still paralysed". She is dependent on fellow prisoners to help her with the most basic of tasks such as eating and dressing. The muscles in her right arm and hand are reported to have atrophied and she has no sensation in her right hand or arm. She also complains of experiencing frequent severe shoulder pain and has recurrent nightmares about her experience.

Gülderen Baran presented a complaint of torture when she appeared in court direct from police custody on 17 August. She was charged with membership of an illegal organization and with taking part in armed activities. She claims that a court-appointed doctor gave her only a cursory examination. The doctor did, however, recommend that she receive neurological attention for the loss of movement in her arms. After her transfer to prison, she was examined at Cerrahpasa Forensic Medical Institute. The first hearing of her case took place on 19 December at which time she appeared in court with both arms still in slings. Her trial is likely to continue for several months.

Gülderen Baran has received some physiotherapy, but it appears that her treatment began at a very late stage. It is also reported that military officers at the prison responsible for accompanying her to hospital have not always taken her there on appointed days or have sometimes taken her there too late to arrive on time for an appointment. She is also reported to be handcuffed on her way to hospital for these visits, although doctors have expressly advised that handcuffs not be used.

Amnesty International is eager to ensure that Gülderen Baran's torture complaint is vigorously pursued in the courts and that she is granted all necessary rehabilitative care without obstruction or interruption.

Her torture testimony is appended in translation, as are extracts from medical reports.

## **Gülderen Baran's torture testimony**

[TRANSLATION]

On 4 August [1995] I was seized in the street in Besiktas by the civil police. I was hit in front of passers-by and then dragged into a shop where the beatings continued. I was then pushed into an ordinary taxi, where they beat me and started to assault me sexually. The driver was afraid but they intimidated him and took his number. When we arrived at Security Headquarters in Aksaray, they dragged me inside by my hair. They took me to a room and the beating began at once. From now on I was blindfolded. They lifted me up by my hair and then dropped me to the ground. They bent my fingers back. Then they stripped me naked and started to hang me up. They bound my shoulders to a beam and stretched me on a cross. They repeatedly hung me, with only short intervals between hangings. They held me under cold pressurized water and then left me in front of a cold fan. Then they hung me again, the 'Palestinian' way, with my arms bound behind my back. After a while they took me down and let me rest. In between bouts of torture they constantly abused me, threatened me, harassed me. For days they subjected me to countless hanging sessions. They made an unsuccessful attempt at raping me. At nights they always kept me in the torture room and did not let me sleep. The first few days they did not even give me any water to drink. For the first eight days, I was always kept blindfold. The radio was always kept on to prevent me from dropping off. They made sure they kept me in a tense and fearful state by making sudden noises or suddenly striking me as I sat waiting with my eyes blindfolded. During my 13 days in detention the police constantly abused me with foul language and curses. My arms and hands are paralysed without any movement, as a result of the torture. My arms are dislocated because of the hanging. My arms are scarred by the marks of the ropes for hanging. I have bruises and bleeding from the beating and abrasions on my legs. Although it is four and a half months since the torture, I still have no movement in my arms.

I did not see a doctor at all during my 13 days in detention, but when I was charged I was taken to the doctor in the Istanbul State Security Court. I was given a superficial examination: the doctor did not undress me; he just looked at me and asked what my complaints were, even though neither of my arms worked, and still do not. He gave me three days rest because of my outer lesions, and a note to the effect that neurological treatment was necessary for my arms.

Although they tried to intimidate me not to, I did lodge a complaint about the torture in court. My complaint was noted on my deposition. I did not show the marks of the torture in court.

7.12.95

## [TRANSLATIONS]

### **Report to the prison director on Gülderen Baran on entry to the prison from prison doctor Dr Ilker Yucesir (Dip No 21213/24681). Dated 18.8.95.**

The prisoner Gülderen Baran was born in 1973 in Kirikkale. The patient, who said she had been tortured during interrogation, was examined on 18 August 1995. She complained of pain in her neck and down her back as far as her waist, headaches, loss of strength, numbness and tingling in both arms. Neck, back, and lower back are sensitive on palpation, and there is a loss of strength in shoulder, elbow, and wrist movements in both arms (++) . Shoulder movements are painful and limited (internal-external rotation, abduction and adduction are limited) (++) ; both elbows have a loss of strength (++) in extension and flexion, but are not painful. Extension and flexion of both wrists painful (++) and there is loss of strength. Metacarpophalangeal joints 1 and 5 of the right hand are painful (+) and oedematous. There is an ecchymotic lesion that stretches from the proximal fifth to the proximal half of the brachial mid-line on the right biceps (this is yellowed). On the middle of the right arm there is bruising with abrasion on the radius extending to the medial side and towards the back, of about 8-10cm length, 1cm wide at the start but broadening towards the rear. On the inner face of the right radius there is a 3cm linear bruise located 4cm above the wrist. On the left arm, about 10 cm above the wrist, on the medial face, there are two grazed bruises, 1cm wide and 6-7cm in length extending to the back of the arm from the mid-line. On the outer face of the left arm 5 cm above the wrist there is a patch of peeling skin measuring 3 x 3 cm which is healing superficially. There are linear ecchymoses starting from mid-line in both armpits and turned towards the front of the shoulders. There are ecchymoses on the medial side of both outer popliteal regions. On the distal part of the right quadriceps there is a bruise which is healing, measuring 4 x 10cm, running from the mid line to the medial face. On the proximal part of right tuberositas tibia there is a wound measuring 1 x 3cm and, 2 cm below this, two linear bruises 3 cm long. On the outer side of the left knee there is a wound 2 x 2cm which is covered by a scab. 5 cm from the outer malleole of the left foot on the proximal part and on the achilles tendon, there are ecchymotic lesions. 8-10 cm above the left ankle there is a [illegible] yellowing ecchymotic linear lesion. There are several discrete ecchymotic lesions around the right ankle. The patient complained of vaginal bleeding and bloody discharge 14 days ago; the left ovary was painful on palpation with pain radiating to the waist; the upper and middle points of the right ureter and the middle point of the left ureter were painful on palpation. There is bilateral costal-lumbar sensitivity.

### **Report to the prison director from Dr O Ahmet, prison doctor, 28.9.95**

Following the examination of Gülderen Baran at Bakirkoy Mental Hospital, brachial plexopathy was diagnosed.

### **Medical report dated 11.12.95**

To whom it may concern:

This patient was hung from under the armpits during police interrogation on 4.8.95. She was diagnosed as having bilateral brachial plexus trauma and received a twenty day physiotherapy program between 6.11.95 and 6.12.95. Complex treatment; electrical stimulation was given to both upper extremities through the shoulder. Upon examination, on the left side, proximal and distal arm strength, 3/5; on the right side, proximal, 1/5, distal, 2/5. EMG examination of the patient must be repeated in one month. Minimal functional movement has begun in the patient's left hand, but her right arm and hand are still without movement. She should continue to use the tool which she has been given.

This report has been drawn up at the patient's request.

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From: Medical Office / Europe Regional Program  
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*MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION*

**Gülderem Baran  
TURKEY**

**Keywords**

Theme: Torture

**Summary**

Attached is information about the torture of Gülderem Baran, a 22-year-old female political prisoner who suffered damage to her arms following torture by hanging.

**Recommended Actions**

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses given below:

- expressing deep concern at the torture allegedly inflicted on Gülderem Baran during her interrogation in Istanbul Police Headquarters in August 1995 and at the injuries she suffered as a result
- noting that she lodged an official complaint of torture and asking whether this has yet been pursued by the courts
- urging that those found responsible for her torture are brought to justice
- seeking information on her current situation and asking for assurances that all necessary rehabilitative treatment will be provided without interruption

**Addresses**

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