

## **TURKEY: Urgent need to end isolation in Turkish prisons**

*"Isolation regimes in Turkish prisons must be stopped immediately" Amnesty International said today as it launched its report on the F-Type prisons. The report Turkey: "F-Type" prisons - Isolation and allegations of torture and ill-treatment, relates to an ongoing crisis in the Turkish prisons.*

*"Amnesty International calls on the authorities to end abuses in the prisons and ensure that prisoners be allowed to associate widely with each other for at least several hours each day" added the organization.*

*All reports confirm that a regime of solitary confinement and small group isolation is being imposed in the new F-type prisons.*

*Prisoners are held in small cells either on their own or with up to two others. Many prisoners have allegedly gone without human contact for days, apart from roll-calls, which are said to be frequently accompanied by violence.*

*To the knowledge of Amnesty International none of the prisoners in the F-type prisons have yet been brought out of their units for recreation, proper exercise or sport, nor have they been permitted to associate with other prisoners.*

*"Prolonged isolation can in itself amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and can facilitate torture and ill-treatment. The Turkish government must immediately stop such abuses," said the organization.*

Amnesty International welcomed recent announcements by the Turkish government that they will amend the law and allow association of prisoners in recreational areas. The organization has repeatedly urged the Turkish authorities to take the following measures to bring Turkish prisons into line with international standards:

The regime of small-group isolation and solitary confinement in F-Type and other prisons should be ended immediately. Areas of common use for purposeful activities should be made accessible to prisoners for several hours each day. Article 16 of the Anti-Terror Law should be amended;

Prisoners should never be tortured or ill-treated. They should receive necessary medical treatment. Gendarmes should not be brought into contact with prisoners;

An independent and comprehensive investigation into deaths and allegations of ill-treatment and torture during the December operation should be conducted immediately with the results made public and those responsible being brought to justice;

The prisons should be opened to the scrutiny of human rights defenders including doctors and lawyers to ensure that they are run in accordance with Turkish law and international standards for the humane treatment of prisoners.

## **Background**

Since October 2000 more than 1,000 political prisoners have participated in hunger strikes against the F-Type prisons. Reportedly up to 800 people remain on hunger strike. Seventeen people have already died as a result.

On 9 December the Justice Minister promised that the planned transfer of prisoners to the F-Type prisons would not take place until Article 16

*of the Anti-terror Law, which lays down a draconian regime of isolation, was amended. Yet on 19 December an operation was conducted by the security forces in 20 prisons, as a result of which 30 prisoners and two soldiers died. Subsequently, hundreds of prisoners were transferred to three new F-type prisons.*

*Representatives of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch were in Turkey in early January to research the December operation and the conditions in the new F-Type prisons. Both organizations sought talks with the Justice Ministry as well as access to the prisons, but the requests were refused. They met representatives of the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Parliament, several human rights organizations, lawyers and doctors.*

*AI's new report Turkey: "F-Type" prisons - Isolation and allegations of torture and ill-treatment, AI Index: EUR 44/025/2001, is also available in Turkish. Please refer to this report for more details.*

*\ENDS*

public document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW web : <http://www.amnesty.org>