

TURKEY Kadir A_ababa, Asiye Güden (f), Neriman Sayg_ (f), Osman Ozarslan, Birsen Dumanl_ (f), Yusuf Demir, Ali Aycan, Bar__ Gönül_en, Özgür _ahin, Mehmet Leylek, Kaz_m Ceylan, Nuray Özçelik (f), Hulya Turunç (f), Ahmet Gün, Tuncay Y_ld_r_m and other political prisoners in Burdur Prison

A mutiny by political prisoners in Burdur Prison was put down on 5 July, and those involved are now reportedly in solitary confinement. They had barricaded themselves into Burdur Prison in protest at being beaten and ill-treated on their way to court hearings. It is feared that they may now be at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

One of the prisoners, Asiye Güden, was brought to Burdur Courthouse to give a statement today. Police and gendarmerie reportedly beat her severely in the corridors of the courthouse, in full view of 11 lawyers from the Izmir branch of the Human Rights Association and the Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara Bar Associations.

Lawyers and relatives have been refused access to the prisoners. Their lawyers have reportedly even been excluded from the courtroom while their clients were giving statements.

Political prisoners in Burdur Prison in south-west Turkey had reportedly been protesting for two months at being beaten and ill-treated by the police and gendarmerie taking them to court hearings and hospital appointments. They refused further transports from the prison without guarantees for their safety. Eleven of them refused to testify in a case being heard in Izmir State Security Court. On 5 July they and others barricaded themselves into three of the prison wards and set fire to furniture or equipment. A large force of police and gendarmerie stormed the prison, reportedly armed with truncheons, sticks and tear gas, though without guns. They reportedly used bulldozers to break down the walls of the occupied wards.

Some reports say 21 prisoners were injured, of whom the 16 named above were hospitalized and later discharged. Five others had only minor injuries. Other reports say many more prisoners were injured. One prisoner reportedly lost an arm when the security forces bulldozed the walls of the occupied wards. The prisoner, Veli Saç_l_k, is reported to be in a stable condition in Sakarya Hospital.

Official figures say that 14 members of the security forces and only one political prisoner were injured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has long been concerned about conditions in Turkish prisons. In September 1999 ten prisoners died and dozens were injured in a violent clash with guards and soldiers in Ankara Central Closed Prison. The circumstances of the deaths were disputed and lawyers and relatives of the dead were excluded from the autopsy. A recent report on the incident by the Turkish Parliamentary Human Rights Commission concluded that excessive force had been used.

Conditions in the prisons are currently the subject of intense debate in Turkey. At present most prisoners are housed in large wards that hold 60 or sometimes

more prisoners. Construction of wings based on a cell-type system have been completed in many prisons and are due to be put into use in the next few months. The prisoners and their families fear that these will be used as isolation cells and have said that they will resist being moved to them.

The treatment of prisoners during transfer to and from prison has also long been of concern to Amnesty International. Prisoners are usually transferred to other prisons or to court by gendarmes. Amnesty International has received numerous accounts of prisoners being beaten and ill-treated during these transfers and has repeatedly called on the Turkish authorities to ensure that remand and convicted prisoners are never brought into contact with police and gendarmerie.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or German:

- urging that the prisoners in Burdur Prison are not tortured or ill-treated;
- asking for information about the condition of the injured prisoners and urging that they receive any necessary medical treatment;
- urging that lawyers and relatives are given access to prisoners;
- asking to be informed about the result of any investigation into the incident in Burdur Prison on 5 July 2000;
- reminding the Turkish government of its obligations under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Turkey is a state party, which states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."
- calling on the Turkish authorities to ensure that prisoners are managed by prison staff under the authority of the Justice Ministry, and not brought into contact with police and gendarmes.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice
 Professor Hikmet Sami Türk
 Adalet Bakan_,
 Adalet Bakanl____,
 06659 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Adalet Bakan_, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 418 5667

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights
 Mr Rü_tü Kaz_m Yücelen
 Office of the Prime Minister
 Ba_bakanl_k
 06573 Ankara
 Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 417 0476

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 July 2000.