

UA 228/01

Fear for**TURKEY Human Rights Foundation of Turkey  
Their patients**

---

In a 7 September raid on the organisation's Diyarbakır offices, police confiscated information on staff, other doctors supporting them and patients at the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT), which provides treatment and rehabilitation for people who have been tortured by the security forces. Doctors and patients at the center are now at risk of harassment, arrest and torture.

The police arrived at 3pm without a search warrant. HRFT staff refused to let them search the building, and the police called the Diyarbakır Public Prosecutor's Office. By 5pm they had obtained a search warrant which ordered the seizure of all documents related to the treatment of torture victims, which it described as "illegal activities". The police seized all the files and documents in the office, including confidential medical files. The HRFT has taken great care to keep this information confidential, as people known to have complained of being tortured by the security forces face intimidation, torture and "disappearance" to stop them pursuing their complaints.

The police left at 8pm, taking one of the doctors, Dr. Emin Yüksel, with them to give a statement.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The HRFT, which was set up in 1990, has five treatment and rehabilitation centers. More than 1000 people applied to the centers for treatment in 2000 alone. The Diyarbakır center plays a crucial role in the treatment and rehabilitation of torture victims in the southeast of Turkey, which is mainly inhabited by Kurds and where torture and ill-treatment is especially widespread.

In 1998 the HRFT was awarded the Council of Europe's European Human Rights Prize for its "outstanding contribution to the protection of human rights in Turkey" and the struggle for the abolition of torture.

The police are known to pursue people whose names they find in raids like this. In May 1997 they raided the Diyarbakır branch of another human rights organization, the Human Rights Association (IHD). Among other things they took the office's telephone bills. They then traced people called from the office, and reportedly went to these people's houses and questioned them and their neighbors. One family known to have been in contact with IHD reportedly had their house occupied by police officers for five days. They were beaten and kicked, and for those five days the whole family had to stay in one room and were only rarely permitted to eat or use the toilet.

Turkey is obliged to protect complainants and witnesses of torture against ill-treatment or intimidation as a consequence of their complaints or any evidence given, as a state party to the UN Convention against Torture.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, German, or your own language:**

- expressing grave concern that police have confiscated confidential medical files from the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey's Diyarbakır office;

- urging the authorities to ensure that HRFT staff, doctors and their patients identified in these documents are protected from any reprisals, harassment, arrests or torture;
- asking the authorities to publicly acknowledge the vital role of non-governmental organizations such as the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, as outlined in the UN Human Rights Defenders Resolution.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior

Mr Rü\_tü Kaz\_m Yücelen

Ministry of Interior

\_çi\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_\_

06644 Ankara, Turkey

**Fax: + 90 312 418 17 95**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Diyarbakir Police Headquarters

Mr Atilla Çınar

Diyarbak\_r Emniyet Müdürü

Diyarbak\_r Emniyet Müdürlü\_ü

Diyarbak\_r, Turkey

**Salutation: Dear Chief of Police**

Minister of Justice

Prof Hikmet Sami Türk

Ministry of Justice

Adalet Bakanl\_\_\_\_

06659 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes: + 90 312 417 3954 / 418 5667**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

E. Safer Gaydali,

Office of the Prime Minister,

Ba\_bakanl\_k,

06573 Ankara, Turkey

**Fax: + 90 312 417 04 76**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

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 22 October 2001.