

News Flash

Turkey: Deaths and injuries as military police storm prisons

Amnesty International is deeply concerned by reports that Turkish security personnel today stormed 20 prisons, resulting in the deaths of at least 6 prisoners and 2 gendarmes, and dozens of injuries. The operation was designed to bring to an end a 61 day death fast by over 200 prisoners protesting at a plan to transfer them to smaller cells. The human rights organization has today written to the Turkish government, calling upon it to:

ensure that security officers refrain from the use of excessive force, torture or ill-treatment of prisoners as a matter of urgency;

initiate a full, independent and impartial investigation into all instances in which individuals have been killed or wounded in the operation, the results of which should be made public;

suspend those alleged to be responsible from their duties pending the outcome of the investigation;

allow victims' lawyers to observe autopsies and to visit their clients in prison or in hospital, while ensuring that the wounded receive medical treatment under independent supervision and observation.

Amnesty International is also concerned by reports of mass arrests of the protesters' supporters. The organization has urged the Turkish government to ensure that the supporters are neither tortured or ill-treated, and are afforded their full rights. It is understood that a number of human rights defenders, politicians, trade unionists and representatives of non-violent organizations have also been arrested. The

leading human rights defender Eren Keskin - a lawyer - was also detained for an hour. Amnesty International has urged the Turkish government to ensure that anyone detained for peacefully expressing their views is released immediately and unconditionally and that the security forces refrain from any arbitrary detentions.

Amnesty International has also informed the Turkish government that it is alarmed to learn that offices of the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD) have been raided, their office in the eastern town of Van closed and documents confiscated from their Istanbul branch. Amnesty International calls upon the Turkish government to respect the rights of human rights defenders to pursue their legitimate tasks of monitoring and reporting violations.

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