

**TURKEY aban Dayanan (33), human rights defender**

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Police officers have apparently tried to break into human rights defender \_aban Dayanan's apartment, and he has been followed by unidentified individuals. \_aban Dayanan is a leading member of Turkey's largest human rights organization, the Human Rights Association (IHD). The security forces are believed to have been implicated in the murder of several IHD representatives, and Amnesty International is gravely concerned for his safety.

\_aban Dayanan is a member of the IHD's national board, and of the Istanbul branch board. On 19 October the Istanbul branch published a report on a hunger strike by political prisoners, which has been under way for a year. At noon of that day five people reportedly tried to break into \_aban Dayanan's apartment in Istanbul. They were aware that nobody was at home. Neighbours reported that the men introduced themselves as police officers and produced police identity cards. One was apparently wearing a police uniform.

The local police station and the Istanbul Police Headquarters denied all knowledge of the raid when the IHD headquarters and the Istanbul branch contacted them.

\_aban Dayanan also reports that during the last days he has been followed by people in plain clothes, different from the plainclothes police officers who usually keep the IHD Istanbul branch under surveillance.

\_aban Dayanan has been harassed and intimidated by the security forces for some years. Plainclothes police broke into his apartment in January 1996, after the death in custody of journalist Metin Göktepe, a case on which the IHD had campaigned. He received death threats, probably from a far-right group in collusion with the police after the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the armed opposition group Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) (see Extra 27/99, EUR 44/19/99, 25 February 1999).

Following protests against the death of 10 prisoners in Ankara Central Closed Prison in September 1999, police raided the IHD Istanbul branch and beat \_aban Dayanan so badly that he received a medical report certifying that he could not work for two days (Extra 135/99, EUR 44/65/99, 29 September 1999).

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since 1991 at least 10 IHD representatives have been killed. In most cases the killers have never been identified and in some cases members of the Turkish security forces have been strongly implicated. IHD president Ak\_n Birdal was shot in broad daylight in the IHD headquarters in Ankara in May 1998, and barely survived. Amnesty International believes the Turkish authorities created the climate for this assassination attempt, by trying to discredit the IHD and link them to illegal organizations.

IHD branches have been closed on various pretexts, and three are still closed. Many IHD members are now on trial or under investigation in connection with IHD activities.

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

- urging the Turkish authorities to ensure the safety of \_aban Dayanan and to investigate the harassment he has experienced;
- asking them to ensure that human rights defenders are allowed to pursue their lawful role of monitoring and reporting on human rights matters as set out in the UN Human Rights Defenders Resolution;
- calling on the authorities to take effective action to ensure that the security forces and other public servants are aware that the work of human rights defenders is legitimate;
- asking that the branches of the Human Rights Association (IHD) that have been closed are allowed to reopen.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Interior

Mr Rü\_tü Kaz\_m Yücelen

\_çi\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_\_

06644 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams:Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey**

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

**Salutation:Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Mr Nejat Arseven

Office of the Prime Minister

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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 6 December 2001.