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TURKEY: FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CASE OF DR ISMAIL BESIKÇI (see earlier documents of 13 March 1990 - AI Index EUR 44/74/90; and of 17 May 1990 - AI Index: 44/88/90)

The third hearing in the trial of Dr Ismail Besikçi before Istanbul State Security Court was held on 19 June. Again a large crowd had gathered and many were unable to enter the court room. According to reports in the Turkish press some 300 people waiting outside the court room were dispersed by the police using wooden sticks and several people were detained. The next day 14 detainees were taken to court, 13 of whom were arrested on charges of having violated Law No. 2911 on Demonstrations and Assembly.

In protest against the police brutality the defence lawyers announced that they were boycotting the trial "until normal hearing conditions are created". Ismail Besikçi and Ayse Zarakolu, the publisher of two of his recent books who is standing trial with him, refused to testify in protest at the events outside the court room. The hearing was adjourned to 25 July.

The Turkish sociologist and writer Ismail Besikçi, who has been adopted three times by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience because of his writings on the Kurds in Turkey, was rearrested in Istanbul on 12 March 1990. Subsequently he was charged under Article 142/3 of the Turkish Penal Code, which proscribes making "separatist propaganda", for each of his three most recent books: Kurdistan: The Colony between the States; Science Versus Official Ideology, State Versus Democracy and the Kurdish Question; and the third book An Intellectual, An Organization and the Kurdish Question.

Ismail Besikçi, who never advocated violence in his writings, is for the fourth time considered to be a prisoner of conscience and his imprisonment to be in violation of his right to freedom of expression, as set out in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Turkey is a State Party. Amnesty International is appealing for his immediate and unconditional release.

The organization is also appealing for the immediate and unconditional release of the 13 people who were arrested outside the court room as prisoners of conscience. Their names are: Kakul Yazar, Selahattin Okçuoglu, Sultan Aygun (f), Sami Karakoyun, Fatma Dundar (f), Ayla Alt_n_s_k (f), Sertaç K_l_ç, Celal As, Umit Kaya, Suat K_l_ç, Muslum Demir, Ramazan Bulut and Mahmut Metin. Their imprisonment is considered to be in violation of Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights which safeguards the right to freedom of assembly and association.