

EXTERNAL

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Further information (7) on UA 81/95 (EUR 44/44/95, 28 March 1995) and follow-ups (EUR 44/47/95, 31 March; EUR 44/49/95, 6 April; EUR 44/62/95, 26 May; EUR 44/63/95, 1 June, EUR 44/64/95, 2 June 1995 and EUR 44/77/95, 12 July 1995) - Prisoner of Conscience / Fear of Torture / Fear for Safety / Medical Concern

TURKEY Eren Keskin (f), lawyer and member of Istanbul Human Rights Association

As a result of legal changes which came into force on 30 October 1995, lawyer and human rights activist Eren Keskin has been released pending retrial. Largely as a result of pressure by the European Parliament, modifications were made to the wording of Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law, under which most prisoners of conscience in Turkey are held. Although the reform of Article 8 is unsatisfactory and still permits the prosecution of people for their non-violent opinions, the changes mean that all existing convictions must be reviewed by the courts.

Eren Keskin told Amnesty International: *"On 9 November, I was brought before Istanbul State Security Court No 3. The soldiers brought me into court in handcuffs - this is actually against Turkish legal procedure, but they were being obstinate. Anyway, on the judge's insistence they took off the handcuffs and the court hearing started. I am now being retried for the same offence, but while the trial continues I have been released.*

*"I got cards from various parts of the world - many different places. They not only send me messages of support, but also copies of the letters they had written to the government here in Turkey. Unfortunately I was never able to receive the flowers sent by Amnesty International at the time of my arrest. The prison officials refused to let them in the prison, for fear that I might injure somebody with the flower-pot!... well, we experience such comic things here...*

*"Wherever there are women suffering around the world I now feel closer to them after my prison experiences. I felt very strongly the support of Amnesty International during my months in prison. But imprisonment has not changed my opinions or my determination to work for human rights and for women's freedoms."*

Eren Keskin was arrested on 1 June 1995 to serve a two years and six months' prison sentence for writing and publishing "separatist propaganda". Amnesty International considered her to be a prisoner of conscience and continues to call for her release to be made unconditional and for the charges against her to be dropped. Her next hearing is scheduled for 16 January 1996. However, no further action by the Urgent Action Network is requested at present. Thank you to all who sent appeals on behalf of Eren Keskin.