

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 331/91 Health Concern

10 October 1991

TURKEY: Muharrem Erya_ar, aged 36, married with five children

Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the refusal of the Turkish authorities to allow adequate medical care and attention for Muharrem Erya_ar. He is a 36-year-old political prisoner who is suffering from inoperable naso-pharyngeal cancer involving the sinuses, throat and ears, and from Behçet's disease (an ideopathic inflammatory disease).

Despite a very unfavourable prognosis, his lawyers have so far been unsuccessful in appealing for his release on health grounds. The Turkish Criminal Procedure Code does, however, allow for suspension of sentence where a prisoner's life is endangered, which hospital doctors have certified to be the case.

At present he is being held in Buca prison in Izmir. He has recently been undergoing a course of radiotherapy and doctors have begun chemotherapy. He has not, however, been admitted to hospital; he is transported handcuffed daily between Buca prison and the cancer unit of a local hospital where he is kept shackled to his bed. His eyesight has been affected by Behçet's disease: he is blind in the left eye and has reduced vision in the right. Recent reports indicate that his cancer has reached a stage where he has become unable to swallow and thus to feed normally. There are fears that his life expectancy may be very short.

The conditions in Buca prison are known to be poor and insanitary. There are reported to be mice in the cells and all washing is done with cold water. Muharrem Erya_ar, who is married with five children, is reported to have recently been refused family visits after having made a complaint about the conditions of detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Muharrem Erya_ar was sentenced to eight years and three months' imprisonment in September 1989 on charges of robbery, the proceeds of which were alleged to have been intended for an illegal political organization. He was initially serving his sentence in Nazilli Special Type Prison, but was moved to Buca Closed Prison in Izmir in May 1991 in order to allow him to receive medical treatment. It is not known

when exactly Muharrem Erya_ar's cancer or the Behçet's disease were diagnosed.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing extreme concern about Muharrem Erya_ar who is reported to be seriously ill;
- noting that he has been refused remission of sentence although such a provision exists under Turkish law where a prisoner's life is endangered;
- stressing that he suffers from an inoperable naso-pharyngeal cancer and that his prognosis is extremely poor and urging that he be allowed to receive medical attention in surroundings best conducive to his proper care.

APPEALS TO:

Directorate
Forensic Medical Institute
Adli Tip Kurumu Ba_kanli_i
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanligi
06659 Ankara/Turkey
Telegrams: Adli Tip Kurumu Ba_kanli_i, Ankara, Turkey
Fax: +90 4 125 40 66

Dear Sirs

Professor Dr Suat Bilge
Minister of Justice
Adalet Bakanligi
06659 Ankara/Turkey
Telegrams: Adalet Bakanligi, Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: +90 4 125 40 66

Dear Minister

President Turgut Özal
Devlet Ba_kanl____
06100 Ankara, Turkey
Telegrams: President Özal, Ankara, Turkey
Telex: 42875 bbk tr
Faxes: (via Press Office) +90 4 168 5012

Dear President

COPIES TO:

President of Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:
Mr Eyüp A__k
nsan Haklar Ara_t_rma Komisyonu Ba_kan_
TBMM
Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 4 11 91 664
+90 4 42 06 941

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 November 1991.