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TURKEY: THE COVER-UP CONTINUES -- SECOND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RESEARCHER BANNED

Helmut Oberdiek, a German citizen and Amnesty International delegate, was detained in Adana yesterday while carrying out research there on behalf of the organization.

"This appears to be yet another example of the choking off of sources of information about human rights violations in Turkey over the past two years," Amnesty International said today.

It has so far been impossible to establish direct contact with Helmut Oberdiek, but according to sources, he was brought to Atatürk Airport in Istanbul where he is currently being held while awaiting deportation to Germany. He has not been subjected to any ill-treatment.

The deportation is being carried out on the grounds that Helmut Oberdiek was declared *persona non grata* in December 1994. The Turkish authorities were informed that Helmut Oberdiek was entering Turkey on 26 May 1995, but it appears that the fact that he was banned was only "remembered" on 6 June.

In September 1994 the researcher at the International Secretariat of Amnesty International, Jonathan Sugden, was denied entry to Turkey. The Turkish authorities did not supply detailed information about the grounds for the ban, but claimed that the researcher had secretly contacted members of the illegal armed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) - an allegation rejected as groundless by Amnesty International.

Amnesty International has on several occasions over the past two years expressed concern about the suppression of information about human rights violations in Turkey. Officials of the local Turkish Human Rights Association (HRA) have been subjected to death threats, a bombing campaign, prosecution, and imprisonment. Ten members of the HRA have been murdered. Kurdish-owned newspapers reporting events in the southeast, where a 10-year-old conflict between security forces and the PKK is continuing, have been subject to harassment, confiscation and closure.

Human rights violations are on the increase in Turkey. In 1994 the number of "disappearances" in police custody doubled to an unprecedented figure of at least 55, and there were more deaths in custody as a result of torture than in any year since 1982. The numbers of prisoners of conscience is also on the rise, while the Turkish Government fails to enact long promised reforms to the penal code. On 1 June the lawyer Eren Keskin, former

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secretary of the Istanbul branch of the HRA began a two year sentence as a prisoner of conscience for writing a newspaper article.

While the intimidation and obstruction of information sources continues, the Turkish government still proclaims that Turkey is a country open to scrutiny by international observers. Following the first ban on an Amnesty International researcher in September 1994 the Turkish authorities repeatedly denied that the ban applied to Amnesty International as an organization but only applied to the individual concerned. The prohibition of a second research delegate suggests that in effect a blanket ban on access by Amnesty International is being applied. The organization is protesting in the strongest terms to the Turkish Government and will inform international governmental organizations of this disquieting development.

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