

URGENT ACTION

DOZENS AT RISK OF TORTURE IN POLICE DETENTION

A group of 47 people, including men, women and three children, were detained between 18 and 21 May during police raids following clashes between security forces and the armed PKK in Urfa province, south eastern Turkey. There are credible allegations that the adults were subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. As of 24 May, 22 of them, including the three children, have been released. The 25 still being held at the police's anti-terrorism branch are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment and must be given immediate access to independent medical care.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Minister of Interior, Süleyman Soylu
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Dear Minister,

I am writing regarding the allegations of torture and other ill-treatment in the aftermath of an armed clash between the security forces and the armed PKK in the early hours of 18 May in Halfeti, Urfa, during which a police officer and two others were killed, and two other police officers were injured. Following the clash, I understand 47 individuals, including three children, were detained between 18 and 21 May. As of 24 May, 22 individuals, including the three children, have been released, with bail conditions applied on the adults.

According to their lawyers' testimony and photographs seen by Amnesty International, some of the adult detainees were handcuffed behind their backs and kept on the ground in a stress position in the garden of the Bozova Yaylak Gendarmerie command post, Urfa province; police officers allegedly beat detainees held in anti-terrorism branch of Urfa security directorate with the butt of their weapons, kicked and punched them while interrogating them, and applied electric shocks to some of the detainees' genitals. Detainees also told their lawyers that they have been prevented from being seen by doctors without the presence of police officers.

At the time of writing this letter, I believe the 25 individuals still held in police detention at the anti-terrorism branch in Urfa continue to be at serious risk of further ill-treatment. I would like to remind you that torture and other ill-treatment is strictly prohibited under both domestic and international law.

I therefore urge you to ensure that individuals in police custody at the Urfa anti-terrorism branch are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment and that they are provided with independent medical care immediately. Furthermore, the credible allegations of torture must be subject to a prompt, independent, impartial and effective investigation.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

47 individuals including three children were detained during police raids following an armed clash between security forces and the armed PKK in the early hours of 18 May. The detentions took place between 18 and 21 May in Bozova and Halfeti districts as well as the town centre of Urfa, south eastern Turkey. By 24 May, 22 among them including three children had been released with bail conditions applied on the adults. The remaining 25 people including at least three women are still being held at the Urfa anti-terrorism branch.

Lawyers acting on behalf of some of the detainees told Amnesty International that many detainees sustained head injuries, cuts and bruises to their faces, legs and bodies. Lawyers could see that some of the detainees had stitches on their heads. However, they could not determine how and when those wounds were inflicted. Images of some of the detainees apparently laying face down on the ground of the Bozova Yaylak Gendarmerie command post with their hands cuffed behind their backs, were circulated in the media. Through their lawyers, detainees reported that officers had stepped on their heads, repeatedly kicked and punched them. While in police custody, in cells at the Urfa anti-terrorism branch, they were individually taken out, brought into a darkened room, and repeatedly hit during interrogation. Some were blindfolded during interrogation, Lawyers reported that at least four of the detainees had told them having been electrocuted and punched in the genitals.

Lawyers have also reported to Amnesty International that their clients had not been provided with the opportunity of a confidential consultation with doctors, with police officers being present during their examination. Some also reported to their lawyers that they were not physically examined by a doctor, but only asked if they had any injuries in front of the police officers.

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is prohibited under international and Turkey's domestic law under all circumstances.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Turkish, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 5 July 2019

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.