

15 January 2002

Further information on UA 228/01 (EUR 44/064/2001, 10 September 2001) - Fear for safety

TURKEY Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
Their patients

New names: Sezgin Tanr_kulu (m), lawyer, aged 38
Recai Aldemir (m), doctor
Emin Yüksel (m), doctor

Police have returned documents, including confidential medical files, confiscated from the Diyarbak_r offices of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) having kept them for over a month. Amnesty International remains concerned that HRFT staff, doctors and their patients may be subjected to reprisals, harassment, arrests or torture as a result of being identified in these documents.

Pressure against the organization continues as a trial has been opened against HRFT Diyarbak_r representative Sezgin Tanr_kulu, while two doctors working for the HRFT - Dr Recai Aldemir and Dr Emin Yüksel - have been transferred to medical duties away from Diyarbak_r as an apparent disciplinary measure. Amnesty International is concerned that this was a deliberate act of harassment and an attempt to impede their legitimate human rights activities.

On 10 October 2001, police returned all patient and doctor-related documents that they had confiscated during a raid at the Diyarbak_r offices of HRFT on 7 September 2001. The raid not only breached medical ethics of confidentiality, but has also apparently deterred individuals from contacting the HRFT for treatment and rehabilitation. Visitor numbers have therefore decreased. Local authorities have launched an investigation into the legality of the search and the confiscation of medical files.

An initial investigation by the prosecutor at the Diyarbak_r State Security Court against the Diyarbak_r offices of the HRFT and its representative lawyer Sezgin Tanr_kulu, on charges of supporting the illegal Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was dropped on 25 October 2001. However, a trial has since been opened against Sezgin Tanr_kulu for establishing a medical treatment and rehabilitation centre without seeking permission from the relevant authorities. In similar trials against the Adana and Istanbul offices of the HRFT, courts have established that there was no need for such permission to be obtained from the Health Ministry.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, German or your own language:

- expressing concern at the prosecution of Sezgin Tanr_kulu for "establishing a medical treatment and rehabilitation centre without seeking permission from the competent authorities" and calling for the charges against him to be dropped;
- expressing concern at the reported transfer of Dr Recai Aldemir and Dr Emin Yüksel away from Diyarbak_r, which was an apparently deliberate act of harassment and an attempt to impede their legitimate human rights activities;
- urging the authorities to ensure that staff, doctors and their patients identified in documents confiscated from the HRFT offices in Diyarbak_r are protected from any reprisals, harassment, arrests or torture;

- asking the authorities to publicly acknowledge the vital role of non-governmental organizations such as the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, as outlined in the UN Human Rights Defenders Resolution.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Prof Hikmet Sami Türk

Ministry of Justice

Adalet Bakanl____

06659 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 417 3954 / 418 5667

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Health and Social Welfare

Osman Durmu_

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

Sa_l_k ve Sosyal Yard_m Bakanl____

06434 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Health Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes:+ 90 312 431 4879

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Nejat Arseven

Office of the Prime Minister,

Ba_bakanl_k,

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Fax: + 90 312 417 04 76

Salutation: Dear Minister

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 February 2002.