



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TURKEY: APPEAL CASES

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Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Dr Muhammed Jalal Shams, Osman _eker, Kubilay Çil: Prisoners of conscience for their religious beliefs

Dr Muhammed Jalal Shams, Osman _eker and Kubilay Çil have been remanded in prison to await trial. Amnesty International adopted them as prisoners of conscience detained for their peaceful religious beliefs.

Dr Muhammed Jalal Shams - who is a German citizen of Pakistani origin - and the Turkish citizens Osman _eker and Kubilay Çil were arrested in Istanbul on the night of 13 April 2002 together with 10 other members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Turkey. On 17 April, Dr Muhammed Jalal Shams, Osman _eker and Kubilay Çil were remanded in prison while the others were released pending trial. The three men are currently remanded in the high-security "F-Type" Prison in Kand_ra in the Western province of Kocaeli. Dr Muhammed Jalal Shams reportedly suffers from a cardiac condition which may deteriorate should he not receive appropriate medical treatment while in detention.

Dr Muhammed Jalal Shams, who is an *Imam* (prayer leader), had reportedly just arrived in Turkey. According to Turkish television, the police had heard about his arrival and had followed him from the airport before raiding the premises where he was staying and arresting him and the others.

The indictment dated 24 May 2002 charges Dr Muhammed Jalal Shams, Osman _eker and Kubilay Çil with leadership of a "terrorist" organization under Article 7 paragraph 1 sentence 1 of the Anti-Terror Law which carries sentences of five to 10 years' imprisonment. However, in contrast to these charges the prosecutor who drafted the indictment states that the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community denounced the concept of Jihad as meaning armed struggle for Islam.

Amnesty International is concerned that Dr Muhammed Jalal Shams, Osman _eker and Kubilay Çil are prisoners of conscience who have been detained merely for their non-violent religious beliefs. Article 24 of the Turkish constitution states that "everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction". The same right is protected in Article 9 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms to which Turkey is a state party. Since August 2000 Turkey is also a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which protects under Article 18 the freedom of thought, conscience and belief.

Background information:

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was founded in the late nineteenth century and has approximately 10 million followers worldwide; between three and four million live in Pakistan. They are considered by orthodox Muslims as heretical. Although Ahmadis follow most of the same tenets as orthodox Muslims, they differ in their religious belief by calling their founder, Mirza Ghulam Ahmed,

Allah's promised Messiah. The generally accepted Muslim belief is that there is no prophet after Mohammad, who died in AD 632. In addition, orthodox Muslims assert that essential belief was established for all time during Mohammad's lifespan. The Ahmadiyya faith interprets this principle more liberally and their belief requires them to actively go out into the world and seek converts. As a result of these divergences, Ahmadis have been subjected to discrimination and persecution in some Islamic countries. The group has reportedly been organized in Turkey since 1995 and has a presence in eight districts and also in northern Cyprus.

Recommended action:

Please send politely worded

letters to the addresses

below in English or your

own language

<p>President of Turkey:</p> <p>President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Cumhurba_kanl____, 06100 Ankara, Turkey</p> <p>Faxes: +90 312 468 5026</p> <p>Salutation: Your Excellency</p>	<p>Prime Minister:</p> <p>Mr Bülent Ecevit, Ba_bakanl_k, 06573 Ankara, Turkey</p> <p>Faxes: +90 312 417 0476</p> <p>Salutation: Dear Prime Minister</p>	<p>Minister of Justice:</p> <p>Prof Hikmet Sami Türk, Adalet Bakanl____, 06659 Ankara, Turkey</p> <p>Faxes: +90 312 418 5667 +90 312 417 3954</p> <p>Salutation: Dear Minister</p>
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Send copies of your letters to:

- The diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country
- The Minister of Foreign Affairs: Ismail Cem, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, D__i_leri Bakanl____, 06100 Ankara, Turkey, Faxes: +90 312 287 1581, Salutation: Dear Minister
- The State Minister responsible for Human Rights: Nejat Arseven, address is the same as of Prime Minister, Salutation: Dear State Minister.