

6 June 2001

Further information on UA 92/01 (EUR 44/022/2001, 10 April 2001) - Death Threats / Fear for safety**TURKEY Eren Keskin (f), 41] lawyers and leading human
Osman Baydemir, 30]rights defenders**

The death threats against human rights defenders Eren Keskin and Osman Baydemir stopped when this UA was issued. Both have asked Amnesty International to pass on their greetings and thanks to all who took part in this successful Urgent Action. Eren Keskin said, "I have been a human rights defenders for 10 years, but it was only after Amnesty International issued the UA that for the first time the authorities proposed to protect me and my colleague. I highly appreciate the activities of the Amnensty members on our behalf and send my warmest thanks to them."

The authorities have demonstrated that they took the concerns raised by Amnesty International seriously. The police, reportedly even the Anti-Terror Branch, have offered protection. Both have refused bodyguards, but stressed that the authorities have a responsibility to protect all their citizens.

Eren Keskin had been receiving telephone death threats for years, and these had recently increased. A prosecutor reportedly called to tell her about a website which contained threats against her.

Osman Baydemir had been followed and received telephone death threats. On 24 May he was arrested at the Human Rights Association (IHD) branch office in Diyarbakir and brought to police headquarters. Four trade unionists arrested at the same time were locked up in cells, but he was held in a room where a number of police officers came to see him. They asked him to give a statement on a speech he had given at the IHD Diyarbakir Annual Congress in December 2000, saying the prosecutor had ordered them to take a statement from him. He refused, since under Turkish law the police are not supposed to interrogate lawyers. He gave a statement to the prosecutor the next day, who told him that he had not ordered the police to take a statement from him.

The police also questioned him about the death threats he had received, and he gave them a detailed statement. The people who came and threatened him in the IHD Diyarbakir office in November 2000 are believed to have been members of an intelligence service linked to the gendarmerie, called JITEM.

Since the threats have been brought to an end no further action is necessary now. Amnesty International will stay in contact with the human rights defenders and resume campaigning should this be necessary.