

**PUBLIC**

AI Index: EUR 44/54/00  
Distrib: PG/SC

To: Health professionals  
From: Medical office / Turkey team  
Date: 7 November 2000

***MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION***

**Ill-health Kadri Gökdere  
Turkey**

**Key words** ill-health / lack of sufficient medical treatment

**Summary**

Kadri Gökdere, a political prisoner in Mus in eastern Turkey, is in urgent need of medical treatment. He has been diagnosed with advanced cirrhosis of the liver and was operated in June 1998, but has since received little treatment whilst his situation is deteriorating.

**Recommended actions**

Please write letters to the addresses below,

- introducing yourself as a concerned health professional;
- enquiring about the current state of health of Kadri Gökdere in Mus prison;
- expressing deep concern about reports of his ill-health, including advanced cirrhosis of the liver;
- urging the authorities to immediately provide Kadri Gökdere with access to adequate medical treatment in accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners;
- seeking assurances that Kadri Gökdere is given immediate further tests and specialist medical treatment as recommended by doctors.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 31 December, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

## **Addresses**

Prime Minister  
Mr Bulent Ecevit  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Basbakanlik  
06573 Ankara, Turkey  
Faxes: +90 312 417 0476  
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Health  
Osman Durmus  
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare  
Saglik ve Sosyal Yardim  
Bakanligi  
06434 Ankara, Turkey  
Faxes: +90 312 431 4879

Minister of Justice  
Prof Hikmet Sami Turk  
Adalet Bakanligi  
06659 Ankara, Turkey  
Faxes: +90 312 425 4066 and +90 312 417 3954  
Salutation: Dear Minister

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights  
Mr Rustu Kazim Yucelen  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Basbakanlik  
06573 Ankara, Turkey  
Faxes: +90 312 417 0476  
Salutation: Dear Minister

Prison director Mus Prison  
Mus E Tipi Kapali Cezaevi  
Cezaevi Muduru  
Mus  
Turkey  
Salutation: Dear Prison Director

## **Copies**

Please send copies of your letters to:

Human Rights Foundation [TIHV]  
Menekse 2. sokak 16/6  
06440 Kizilay  
Ankara  
Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 425 4552  
E - mailto:tihv@tr-net.net.tr

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

**PUBLIC**

AI Index: EUR 44/54/00  
Distrib: PG/SC

Date: 7 November 2000

***MEDICAL CONCERN***

**Ill-health Kadri Gökdere  
Turkey**

Kadri Gökdere, a political prisoner in Mus in eastern Turkey, is in urgent need of medical treatment. He has been diagnosed with advanced cirrhosis of the liver and was operated in June 1998, but has since received little treatment whilst his situation is deteriorating.

**Background information**

Kadri Gökdere was an active board member of the Turkish teacher's union Egitim Sen and also a member of the Democratic Platform in Diyarbakir. In 1996 Kadri Gökdere was arrested and later convicted to 18 years and nine months in prison on charges of supporting the armed opposition group Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). During the trials, the prosecution allegedly used a statement by a "repentant" - a statement by a prisoner who may receive a reduction in sentence when providing information which leads to the conviction of another person "suspected of terrorist activity". Kadri Gökdere's appeal was unsuccessful. His appeal to the European Court of Human Rights is currently being prepared. He is being held in a prison in Mus in eastern Turkey.

**History of health**

In June 1998 Kadri Gökdere was diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver in an advanced stage, reportedly because of chronic hepatitis B. He was operated in a hospital in Diyarbakir and his gallbladder was removed. This improved his health somewhat, but he continued to suffer from a number of symptoms including tiredness, regular nose bleeds, skin problems, kidney problems, fever, jaundice, oedema and indigestion. On 13 June 2000 Kadri Gökdere was admitted to a hospital in Van in eastern Turkey. He had blood tests which showed elevated enzyme levels. He reportedly was refused permission to speak to a doctor about the likely prognosis of his illness and, furthermore, gendarmes removed him from hospital. Instead of receiving treatment he was taken to the prison in Van. He reportedly was held in isolation in a damp and dirty cell. He had no bed in his cell and water from the toilet was leaking onto the cell floor. He did not receive an appropriate diet. He reportedly was given Rennies (antacid), Buscopan (against stomach cramps) and Bevitin C (vitamin) for medication instead of specialist medical care.

On 29 June 2000 he was taken from Van back to the prison in Mus without having received proper medical treatment. Amnesty International is urging the authorities to immediately provide Kadri Gökdere with access to adequate medical treatment in accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

**Medical care in Turkish prisons**

Amnesty International has raised the issue of poor medical care in Turkish prisons in a number of reports over many years. Other organizations have had the same concerns. The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) has drawn attention on a number of occasions to the inadequacy of health care in Turkish prisons. In 1997 the CPT visited Turkey and the 1999 report of that visit concluded that "the health-care services in all of the establishments visited were inadequately resourced, having regard to the number of patients for which they had responsibility. This had negative repercussions not only as regards the quality of treatment provided, but also as regards medical examinations on admission and the compliance with the health-care services' more general obligations to monitor sanitary conditions, control the quality of food and implement vaccination programmes."

The report went on to state that "difficulties of this nature have been observed by the CPT's delegations for many years, and in fact were highlighted in the report on its very first visit to Turkey in September 1990." The CPT report recommended that "the Ministries of Justice and Health carry out a full-scale review of health-care staff resources in Turkish prisons, with the aim of bringing them to a level at which they can fulfil in a satisfactory manner the responsibilities placed upon them. In the context of this review, particular attention should be given to specialised training for prison doctors in respect of the tasks they are called upon to perform and to the appointment of qualified nursing staff in prison health care services."

Although the prisons visited by the CPT did not include those in which Kadri Gökdere has been held, the level of health care available would not be better than those criticised elsewhere in Turkey by the CPT.

(Report to the Turkish Government on the visit to Turkey carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) from 5 to 17 October 1997, CPT/Inf(99) 2 [EN], para. 141.