
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 57/95

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **TURKEY** - FOR RESPONSE ONLY; **CUBA** (this item will be sent to international media)

INTERNAL -

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

- NBC SUPERCHANNEL is showing a programme on Turkey on Sunday, 19 March.
- Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) will be showing our Turkey ENR tonight at 11 pm (after the main news) in a programme called "A Week in Politics".

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Campaign on Women - 7 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 12/95, 34/95, 37/95, 42/95 & 44/95

Brazil - 27 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 29/95

RWANDA - 6 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

SYRIA - 11 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 32/95

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

EVENTS AND MISSIONS

The details below are for your information only, and there may or may not be media work involved. Can you please not publicize anything until further notice from the IS.

MISSION TO CHECHNYA 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 53 & 54

MISSION TO BURUNDI 13 - 27 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

MISSION TO KENYA 16 March - 2 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

MISSION TO HAITI 18 March - 3 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 58/95

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TURKEY: UNWARRANTED USE OF FIREARMS BY POLICE AGAINST DEMONSTRATORS IN ISTANBUL

The excessive use of force by Turkish police apparently led to the deaths of at least 20 demonstrators in Istanbul this week when police broke up a rally to protest an earlier attack on a cafe by unidentified assailants.

Amnesty International called today on the Turkish government to ensure that the deaths are thoroughly and impartially investigated, and those responsible are brought to trial.

The Secretary General of Amnesty International today wrote to Tansu Çiller, Prime Minister of Turkey, expressing concern at the deaths of at least 20 demonstrators in disturbances in the Gaziosmanpa_a and Ümraniye districts of Istanbul. These disturbances followed the 12 March attack on a café in Gaziosmanpa_a frequented by members of Turkey's Alawite minority.

Video footage of the incident shows that police were under attack from demonstrators throwing sticks, stones and other objects, and that both police and civilians were injured by demonstrators.

Video footage also clearly shows that police were shooting directly into the crowd with guns. The demonstrators who were killed died of gunshots, apparently fired by police. On 14 March, a civilian, _efika Sevi, died as a result of burns when a petrol bomb hit the car in which she was travelling near the scene of disturbances.

There was no loss of life in disturbances at a later demonstration in Ankara on 14 March. Violence broke out as demonstrators protested at the killings of the previous days in Istanbul and police used non-lethal methods of crowd control, including water-cannon, rather than firearms.

In the letter to the Turkish Prime Minister, Amnesty International pointed out that the United Nations (UN) Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials establish strict limits on the use of force and firearms.

The UN Basic Principles require that firearms be used by police only if other non-violent means prove ineffective, and that such use should be properly reported. Abusive or unlawful use should be punished, according to the guidelines, which also require that law enforcement officials should "minimize damage and injury, and respect and preserve human life".

Further, the UN Basic Principles state: "Intentional lethal use of firearms may only be made when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life."

Amnesty International is urging the Turkish government to ensure that those security force members trying to control volatile demonstrations are aware of those UN Basic Principles.

The human rights organization is also urging the government to make sure that Turkish security force personnel are properly equipped to exercise non-lethal forms of crowd control and supplied with self-defense equipment in order to reduce the need to use firearms.

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CUBA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES OPPORTUNITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS VISIT TO CUBA

Amnesty International welcomes the statement by Cuban President Fidel Castro yesterday that human rights organizations will be allowed to visit Cuba and hopes that this will lead to an open dialogue on human rights concerns in the country.

The statement, made after a meeting in Paris with Danielle Mitterand, did not give specific details of such visits. A subsequent press statement by Danielle Mitterand suggested the possibility of Amnesty International participating in a human rights visit to Cuba. The organization will be seeking further clarification from the Cuban authorities of the terms of reference of any such possible visit.

Based on Amnesty International's experience in visiting the country in 1988 when it received full cooperation from the authorities, the organization believes that any such future visit by human rights groups should encompass full and free access to prisoners of conscience and other political prisoners, as well as any prisoners who have allegedly suffered ill-treatment and those facing possible death sentences.

Such a visit should also include discussions with a wide range of relevant government officials and unrestricted contact with all sectors of Cuban society.

The organization added that its current human rights concerns in Cuba include the imprisonment of some 600 prisoners of conscience, the frequent short-term detention and harassment of peaceful human rights and political activists, deficient detention and trial procedures for all political prisoners, allegations of ill-treatment in prisons and police stations and the continued use of the death penalty.

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