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## **Turkey: One dead and scores injured as police breakup demonstrations**

The recent death of a protester in Turkey, and the allegations of excessive use of force by police and other ill-treatment of demonstrators must be investigated, Amnesty International said today as protests continue in the southern city of Adana and the eastern city of Diyarbakır.

Reports that imprisoned Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Öcalan had been ill-treated by prison guards sparked demonstrations in provinces across southern and eastern Turkey and in Istanbul, starting on 17 October. In some instances the protests became violent after police used force to prevent demonstrations taking place -- stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at police and property was damaged.

Police used plastic bullets and live ammunition to disperse demonstrators. One protestor, named as Ahmet Özkan, was killed in the town of Diyarbakır, eastern Turkey, and many others, including some who are critically wounded, remain in hospital with gunshot wounds and other injuries. Many of the injured are children. It was reported that of 62 people who have been hospitalized, seven were police officers.

According to the Turkish Human Rights Association, more than 200 people are currently being detained in relation to the demonstrations. At least one child is being held in an adult detention facility.

Amnesty International acknowledges the difficulties faced by law enforcement officers when policing violent demonstrations and also that the Turkish authorities have an obligation under international law to provide for the safety and security of people and property. However, the Turkish authorities must carry out these obligations in accordance with international standards, particularly the principle that force may only be used by law enforcement officers when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the lawful performance of their duty.

"The Turkish authorities must ensure that police do not use excessive force against demonstrators. They must also investigate promptly, thoroughly and impartially the death of Ahmet Özkan and the allegations of ill-treatment against other protestors" said Andrew Gardner, Amnesty International's researcher on Turkey.

International standards require that law enforcement officials must, as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to proportionate use of force and firearms, which should be used only if other means remain ineffective. Law enforcement officers may use firearms only when less dangerous means are not effective and only to the minimal extent necessary, in order to protect themselves or others against an imminent threat of death or serious injury.

Amnesty International also calls on the authorities to ensure that law enforcement officials and detaining

authorities respect the absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment.