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**PUBLIC STATEMENT
TURKEY
ÖCALAN LAWYERS AT RISK**

Amnesty International condemned today the persecution of the lawyers representing Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). Ahmet Zeki Okçuoglu and Hatice Korkut -- who visited him yesterday -- are particularly at risk.

Both lawyers were reportedly kicked and punched as they arrived at the quay-side at Müdanya to set off for the prison island of Imrali, where Abdullah Öcalan is being held. Both lawyers and their families have received telephone threats. Reportedly even people with the same surname have been harassed.

In response to the threats faced by the lawyers involved in the case, Amnesty International called upon the Turkish Government to support clearly and decisively the principle of the right to defence and the duty of the lawyer to act. This is clearly set out in Article 18 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, which states "*lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions*".

Another alarming episode involved four lawyers working on Abdullah Öcalan's case who held a press-conference at the Press Museum in the Cagaloglu district of Istanbul today. They were jostled by an angry crowd on entering the museum and one of them, Osman Baydemir, was arrested in connection with a statement he had made some weeks ago.

After the press-conference, the lawyers were unwilling to leave the building as there was a group of people shouting right-wing slogans and threats. After initially declining to offer any guarantees for the lawyers' safety, the police eventually brought a vehicle to the museum and accompanied them to relative safety.

The lawyers are reported to have suspended their representation of Abdullah Öcalan, saying that they cannot continue in their duty under the current circumstances, and that his trial cannot be considered fair unless he is properly assisted by competent and committed defence counsel.

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