

EXTERNAL

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Europe
Date: 6 October 1992

@MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

Memli Güngör
£Turkey

Keywords

Theme: deprivation of medical care/ill-health/ill-treatment/torture

Summary

Memli Güngör is a 35-year-old prisoner held in Gaziantep Special Type Prison in the south of Turkey who is serving a sentence of life imprisonment. He was heavily tortured at the time of his arrest in 1980 and spent the first six years of his sentence in military prison. He has had numerous medical problems over the period of his imprisonment and is now reported to be suffering from cancer of the stomach. Doctors recommended several months ago his transfer to a facility where he could receive specialist care.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below:

- expressing concern at reports that Memli Güngör, who has suffered numerous health problems since his imprisonment in 1980, is now suffering from cancer of the stomach and is without access to specialist medical care
- seeking information on whether this diagnosis has been confirmed, on his current state, and on the medical attention and treatment he is receiving
- expressing concern that in the past he appears to have been denied access to proper medical attention and urging that all possible measures will be taken to ensure that he receive sympathetic medical care in surroundings best conducive to the management of his condition

Addresses

Yildirim Aktuna
Ministry of Health & Social Welfare
Sa_lik ve Sosyal Yardim Bakanli_i
06323 Ankara
Turkey

Cezaevi Müdürlü_ü
Gaziantep Özel Tıp Cezaevi
Gaziantep
Turkey
(Prison governor)

Cezaevi ve Tevkifhaneleri Müdürlü_ü
Adalet Bakanli_i
06649 Ankara
Turkey
(Directorate of prisons and places
of detention, Ministry of Justice)

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MEDICAL CONCERN**Memli Güngör
Turkey**

Memli Güngör is a 35-year-old Kurdish prisoner serving a sentence of life imprisonment. He has suffered from a number of health problems during his imprisonment, with a history of a gastric ulcer, and is now reported to have been diagnosed as suffering from cancer of the stomach. He was arrested in 1980 following the military coup in Turkey and accused of involvement with the Kurdish Workers' Party. He was brought to trial before a military court in Diyarbakir with 147 other defendants and at the conclusion of the trial in 1983 was sentenced to death. This was immediately commuted to life imprisonment. (Following the coup of 1980, all cases of "offences leading to the announcement of martial law" became the responsibility of military courts, with defendants held in military prisons for the duration of their trial. Many death sentences were passed by military courts for offences classified as crimes against the state.)

Immediately after arrest, Memli Güngör is reported to have been severely tortured for over a month during interrogation and to have spent almost a month in military hospital following this. He was later moved to Diyarbakir military prison in the southeast of Turkey where he spent the first six years of his imprisonment. Conditions in Diyarbakir prison were extremely harsh; prisoners received virtually no exercise or medical care and during this time Memli Güngör is reported to have developed a gastric ulcer and rheumatism. Repeated and prolonged hunger strikes, in which he participated, were conducted by prisoners in Diyarbakir Military Prison in protest against conditions. Memli Güngör appears to have received little medical care while in Diyarbakir prison.

In 1986 he was transferred to Malatya E-type prison in central Turkey where his medical problems were acknowledged but where he still appears to have been without medical treatment. The following year he was transferred to Gaziantep special prison where, after various investigations for further problems, he was transferred to Adana University medical faculty. Here endoscopy is reported to have revealed inflammation of the stomach. A hernia and liver problems are also reported to have been diagnosed (no further details available).

Although medication had been prescribed, it is reported that Memli Güngör was unable to take these as he was transferred shortly afterwards to Eski_ehir prison. In each of the three prisons where he had been held - Diyarbakir, Malatya and Eskisehir - he is reported to have suffered episodes of gastric bleeding. In November 1991 he was admitted to Eski_ehir hospital where doctors are reported to have diagnosed cancer of the stomach. (It is unclear whether this diagnosis was confirmed.) Hospital doctors asked to see his prison medical dossier, but were

told by prison officials that his records had been lost. They also asked for the medicines he had been prescribed, but were again told that these had been lost.

Following the closure of Eski_ehir prison on 25 November 1991, Memli GÜNGÖR was transferred back to Gaziantep prison. Doctors in Gaziantep, where he is currently imprisoned, have reportedly recommended that he be admitted to a specialist facility. Amnesty International is seeking information on his present state and the medical care and treatment he is receiving.

Memli GÜNGÖR's family live in Istanbul, several hundreds of miles from Gaziantep and an extremely long journey by road, rendering visits difficult. Two years ago his request to be moved to a prison nearer his family was refused although under Turkish law a prisoner may be transferred to a prison near his family if he is ill or if his family are unable to visit him.