

February 20, 1991

UPDATE TWO MORE DEATHS IN DETENTION IN TURKEY IN FEBRUARY

On February 10, 1991, Helsinki Watch issued the attached newsletter concerning the suspicious deaths in detention of five people during the month of January 1991.

Since that time, Helsinki Watch has received reports of two more people who have died in detention under suspicious circumstances. This brings the number of deaths in detention to seven in a six-week period -- the same number of detainees who died in suspicious circumstances during all of 1990. In addition, one of the two recent deaths was reported as a suicide, making a total of three cases in which authorities have alleged that the detainee had killed himself.

The two most recent deaths are:

Kasim Aras

Gunes reported on February 8, 1991, that Kasim Aras had died in Erzerum hospital to which he had been taken in a coma right after his release from Aralik Prison in Kars. The cause was said to be a brain hemorrhage suffered during torture. Aras' brother, Halit Aras, said: "Noncommissioned officers Ihsan Karacaoglu and Salim Taskeser of Aralik County Gendarmerie Station put my brother in this situation." He also said that Kasim Aras had been hospitalized twice during the month he spent in prison. On February 13, the Ministry of the Interior launched an investigation into Aras's death.

Ali Riza Aydogan

On February 14, 1991, *Gunes* reported that 25-year-old Ali Riza Aydogan, who was being detained at the Beyoglu office of the Istanbul Security Directorate, had fallen from the fourth floor of the building and been taken to Taksim Hospital, where he later died. Authorities reported that Aydogan had committed suicide by jumping from the window. Aydogan's father, Muzaffer Aydogan, said: "There was no reason for my son to commit suicide. He was going to get married shortly. He had no relation to any organization or activity."

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Helsinki Watch calls upon the government of Turkey to investigate each of these deaths thoroughly, and, where improper use of lethal force is found, to prosecute vigorously those responsible.