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CRACKDOWN ON ANTI-WAR DEMONSTRATIONS IN TURKEY

Live ammunition was used in Turkey against anti-war demonstrators on several occasions between November 1990 and February 1991. At least one demonstrator was shot dead by police, one was run over and killed by a train in a panic that ensued when police began shooting, and several people were wounded by police gunfire. Helsinki Watch deplores the use of arms by police against peaceful demonstrators in Turkey.

Since the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in August 1990, anti-war sentiment in Turkey has been mounting. It has accelerated since the United States and its allies began military actions against Iraq in January 1991 and since Turkey allowed the U.S. to send warplanes to Iraq from Turkish bases. As a result, anti-war demonstrations have taken place all over Turkey--marches, rallies and meetings. Many of these actions have taken place without interference by Turkish police, but others have been banned or broken up. Demonstrators--some of them children under 18--have been detained by police and sometimes charged with criminal acts. These actions have also been carried out against demonstrators protesting the Turkish government's treatment of Turkish Kurds and other issues.

Helsinki Watch calls on the government of Turkey to permit peaceful demonstrations to take place without interference, to order investigations into those incidents in which demonstrators have been killed or wounded, and to forbid the use of live ammunition as a form of crowd control.

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The following incidents represent only a sample of the dozens of reports that have recently reached Helsinki Watch:

POLICE VIOLENCE

According to the Turkish Human Rights Foundation (HRF) a 17-year-old high school student was shot and wounded by police while distributing anti-war communiques in the Rahmanlar district of Istanbul. The injured youth was later detained and taken to the Political Section of Police Headquarters. (HRF, February 14, 1991)

The Turkish Human Rights Foundation reported on January 26, 1991, that one demonstrator, Macid Kaplan, had been shot dead and two others, Aziz Coban and Kazim Karaca, had been wounded by police gunfire during a demonstration in Tatvan on January 25. Police had opened fire on marchers who were shouting anti-war and anti-American slogans.

On January 26, 1991, two people were seriously wounded by police and 40 detained during a demonstration in Batman that supported Iraq. (HRF, January 27, 1991)

During a confrontation between anti-war demonstrators and police in Istanbul on January 24, 1991, a

youth, Cem Konuk, was shot and seriously wounded by police. Surgeons removed a bullet from his lung in Caba Medical Faculty Hospital; his relatives were not permitted to visit him. Two other people who were injured during the same incident were taken into custody. Conuk was arrested on February 9 and remanded to a detention center. (HRF, Jan. 25 and Feb. 12, 1991)

On January 18, 1991, about 300 Middle East Technical University students organized an anti-war forum in Ankara protesting Turkey's position on the war in the Gulf. Gendarmes tried to break up the meeting, and ten people, including four gendarmes, were injured. Seventeen students were detained. (*Hurriyet*, January 19, 1991)

Cumhuriyet reported (January 14-16, 1991) that 50,000 people took part in an anti-war rally on January 13 in Pendik Square in Istanbul. The crowd was addressed by Erdal Inonu, the head of the Social Democratic People's Party. Police prevented some groups from taking part in the meeting. Police opened fire and thirteen people were slightly injured. One young woman, Yadigar Coskun, 22, was run over and killed by a train when she tried to escape from police during the ensuing panic. *Gunes* reported that her sister, Selma Coskun, required brain surgery and lost an eye.

On November 23, 1990, police raided the cafeteria of the Istanbul College of Journalism and removed anti-war posters and banners. Six students were detained and two suffered broken arms during the incident. The students were released in the evening. When students from Istanbul Yildiz University staged a protest demonstration against the police actions, police detained the chairperson of the student association. (*Hurriyet*, November 24, 1990)

A clash took place in Istanbul on November 14, 1990, when police intervened in an unauthorized anti-war demonstration by the Turkish Revolutionary Party. One of the demonstrators, Abdulgani Gazibaba, was shot in the stomach by police, and a policeman's hand was injured. Police detained 20 people after the clash. (*Gunaydin*, November 15, 1990)

Police opened fire on an unauthorized anti-war demonstration on September 23, 1990, in Istanbul. Two demonstrators were wounded by gunfire, and five by clubs; one policeman was wounded by a Molotov cocktail. Following the clash, 68 people were detained, and some journalists were harassed by police. Criminal charges were later brought against 34 of the demonstrators, who remained in police custody. (HRF, September 24, October 1, 1990)

MEETINGS AND DEMONSTRATIONS BANNED OR DISPERSED

Cumhuriyet reported on February 12, 1991, that a "No to War" meeting planned for February 13 by the Ankara branch of the Human Rights Association had been "postponed for two months" by the Ankara governor's office; no explanation was given.

On February 11, 1991, *Hurriyet* and *Gunaydin* reported that a peace rally planned by opposition parties had been "postponed for two months" by the Istanbul governor's office on the ground that it would "disturb public order." On the same day, a peace meeting planned for Izmir by the Green Party was banned, and a "Peace Train" carrying 100 members of Ankara associations arrived in Adana and was denied access to the Incirlik Base area.

According to *Gunes* (February 2, 1991), a "Peace Rally" planned for February 4 by a committee representing eight opposition political parties was banned by the Istanbul Governor's office.

Cumhuriyet reported on February 2, 1991, that a group of 5,000 people trying to protest against the United States and Israel following Friday prayers were stopped from marching. The road between the Beyazit Mosque and Vezneciler district was blocked by police. Twenty persons were slightly injured and thirty were

detained. Police used force to prevent journalists from taking photos. Similar demonstrations in Batman and Diyarbakir on the same day were also stopped by police.

The Turkish Human Rights Foundation reported on January 28, 1991, that one hundred Human Rights Association members protesting the banning of a "Peace Feast" were dispersed. "Peace" balloons carried by children were destroyed. After the demonstration, police detained for several hours eleven people, including the president of the Istanbul branch of the Human Rights Association, Ercan Kanar.

On January 28, 1991, an anti-war meeting organized by an association of the Ankara Political Science Faculty was banned by the Ankara Governor to "protect public order." (*Cumhuriyet*, January 28, 1991)

Amnesty International reported on January 25 that police, soldiers and "special team" members forcibly dispersed an anti-war demonstration of several thousand people in Batman in southeast Turkey on January 25, 1991. Seventy-four people, including Hinan Iren, Ali Keskin, Nuri Gultekin and Hikmet Aygo were detained and held incommunicado in Batman Police Headquarters. Amnesty later reported that all were released on January 28.

Gunes reported on January 23, 1991, that police had prevented about thirty actors and artists from leaving a placard saying "An End to Imperialist Wars" in front of the US Consulate in Istanbul. Police tore up the placard. The Istanbul State Security Court subsequently opened an investigation into the actions of five of the artists: Edip Akbayram, Artac Arman, Nur Surer, Ilyas Salman and Halil Ergun. Social Democratic People's Party Istanbul Provincial President, Ercan Karakas, will also be investigated for his participation in the demonstration. During the same evening of January 23, police interfered with demonstrations staged at 23 other locations in Istanbul and detained about 50 persons.

According to *Cumhuriyet* (January 7, 1991), a meeting organized by the Ankara Chamber of Medicine concerning the effects of war on human health was prohibited by the Ankara governor's office on January 6, 1991.

The Istanbul Governor refused to permit a "Night of No to War," organized by a group of artists in Istanbul. The meeting was scheduled to be held on November 25, 1990. (*Gunes*, November 26, 1990)

Anti-war rallies scheduled to be held on November 3, 1990, in Izmir and Denizli were banned by the governors of both cities. The Denizli rally was banned on the grounds that it "might threaten the integrity of the country." The rally in Izmir, organized by the People's Labor Party (HEP), was banned because it "would cause a traffic jam." (*Cumhuriyet*, November 1, 1990)

A meeting called "No to Imperialist Wars" was banned three times by the Istanbul Governor; the third meeting was scheduled for September 23, 1990. (*Sabah*, September 24, 1990)

Hurriyet reported on September 3, 1990, that the Ankara governor had banned a festival to celebrate Peace Day on the grounds that it might "disturb public order."

DETENTIONS AND ARRESTS

Cumhuriyet reported on January 29, 1991, that one hundred persons, including the directors of a number of organizations, had gathered in Ankara to protest the war on January 28. Thirteen of them were detained. Among those detained were Ilasan Yalcin, Ankara correspondent for the journal *2000'e Dogru*; Mustafa Meric, Executive Board member of People's Houses; Kamazan Talas, Secretary of the Agriculturalists' Association; Nail Bulut, journalist; Keman Can, journalist; Tezcan Karakus; Cetin Yerlikaya; Ali Riza Cihan, Executive Board Member of People's Houses; Tekin Arac and Kutlu Tuncay.

Police detained 159 Islamic fundamentalist anti-war demonstrators on January 26: 100 in Tatvan, 44 in Bingol, and 15 in Kayseri. Criminal charges were later brought against eight of the Kayseri demonstrators. (HRF, January 27, 1991)

On January 24, 1991, two students were arrested in Trabzon for demonstrating with anti-war banners. Five people were detained after an unauthorized anti-war demonstration in the Incirli district of Istanbul. (*Cumhuriyet*, January 25, 1991) On the same day, 200 Islamic fundamentalists demonstrated against the war in Istanbul and four were arrested.

On January 23, 1991, ten people released "peace doves" at Candogan Park in Denizli to protest the war in the Gulf. The Denizli Public Prosecutor arrested all ten, charged them with "staging unauthorized demonstrations," and asked prison terms of up to three years. Those charged are Denizli Human Rights Association President Yildirim Aycan, Social Democratic People's Party County President Ismail Akbaba, Denizli Municipality Assembly member Hakki Aydin, Halil Kuzu, Ali Riza Ertemur, Yilmaz Yemenoglu, Unal Cengiz, Adil Celik, Sami Kaplan and Muserref Sezginler. (*Gunes*, February 8, 1991)

On January 22, 1991, anti-war demonstrations took place in different neighborhoods in Istanbul; police took 50 people into custody.

Hurriyet reported on January 19, 1991, that a group of about 200 fundamentalists demonstrated against the war in Suleymaniye Square in Istanbul; American and Israeli flags were burned. Four persons were arrested.

One hundred fifty-five people were detained at a rally for "Peace and Life Worthy of Humans" sponsored by the Social Democratic People's Party in Kocaeli on October 27, 1990. One hundred thirty-five were freed the same day, but twenty were charged with "shouting slogans and distributing illegal leaflets." (*Gunes*, October 30, 1990)

Cumhuriyet reported on August 25, 1990, that twenty state officials had held an anti-war demonstration in front of the Fatih municipal building; police took nine into custody.

CHILDREN DETAINED FOR ANTI-WAR PROTESTS

Even children have been detained and sometimes arrested and tried for political crimes, many of them relating to the war in the Gulf. On December 29, 1990, *Dateline* reported that thirty-three minors had been arrested in Turkey during 1990 for having committed political crimes. In late December, 1990, N.A., a sixteen-year old high school student, was released from custody after the second day of a trial against her in Istanbul State Security Court. N.A. was accused of having hung an anti-war poster on a wall in her school, Pendik High School in Istanbul. Detained at the Political Section of Police Headquarters in Istanbul (Gayrettepe) on October 3 and held there for nine days, N.A. reported (according to Amnesty International, October 30, 1990) that she had been slapped and punched by police; she submitted a government-appointed forensic expert's report in support of her claim.

Following her detention, N.A. was remanded to Sagmalcilar prison, where she spent an additional 64 days. Her trial is continuing at Istanbul State Security Court. Three other young people, Bunyamin Yucel, 20, Canan Acar, 18, and Saliha N. Gen, 18, are on trial with N.A. on another charge: being members of an illegal organization--High School Revolutionary Youth. The public prosecutor has asked for 20-year sentences for all four.

At the first hearing in N.A.'s case on December 3, 81 people were detained, after first being beaten by police. Sixty-three were released on December 5. Three lawyers representing the young people were also detained for several hours. Criminal charges were subsequently brought against nine of the detainees.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Letters calling on the Turkish government to permit peaceful demonstrations to take place without interference, to refrain from using firearms against peaceful demonstrators, to investigate deaths and injuries caused by police gunfire in demonstrations, and to release detainees who have been imprisoned for peaceful expression of opinion, should be sent to the Turkish officials listed below:

President Turgut Ozal
Office of the President
Cankaya
Ankara, Turkey

Minister of Justice Oltan Sungurlu
Adalet Bakanligi
Bakanliklar
Ankara, Turkey

Ambassador Nuzhet Kandemir
Embassy of Turkey
1714 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

PREVIOUS HELSINKI WATCH REPORTS ON TURKEY

"Turkey: Five Deaths in Detention in January," *News From Helsinki Watch*. February 1991.

Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Kurds of Turkey (An Update). September 1990.

"Southeast Turkey: Harsh New Decree," *News From Helsinki Watch*, June 1990.

"Freedom of Expression," *News From Helsinki Watch*, February 1990.

"Eight Cases of Torture," *News From Helsinki Watch*, July 1989.

Prison Conditions in Turkey. August 1989.

Paying the Price: Freedom of Expression in Turkey. March 1989.

Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Kurds of Turkey. March 1988.

State of Flux: Human Rights in Turkey. December 1987.

Freedom and Fear: Human Rights in Turkey. March 1986.

News From Helsinki Watch is a publication of Helsinki Watch, an independent organization created in 1978 to monitor domestic and international compliance with the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Accords. The Chairman is Robert L. Bernstein; Vice Chairs, Jonathan Fanton and Alice Henkin; Executive Director, Jeri Laber; Deputy Director, Lois Whitman; Washington Representative, Catherine Cosman; Staff Counsel, Holly Cartner and Theodore Zang, Jr.; Staff Consultant, Ivana Nizich; Orville Schell Fellow, Robert Kushen; Associates, Sarai Brachman, Mia Nitchun and Elisabeth Socolow; Intern, Jemima Stratford

Helsinki Watch is a component of Human Rights Watch, which includes Americas Watch, Asia Watch, Africa Watch, and Middle East Watch. The Chairman is Robert L. Bernstein and the Vice Chairman is Adrian W. DeWind. Aryeh Neier is Executive Director; Kenneth Roth, Deputy Director; Holly J. Burkhalter, Washington Director; Susan Osnos, Press Director.

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