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## **TURKEY: FIFTEEN DEATHS DURING POLICE DETENTION SINCE JANUARY**

**Helsinki Watch is deeply concerned about continuing reports from Turkey of deaths during police detention in suspicious circumstances. In newsletters issued in January and February of this year, we detailed the deaths in detention of seven people. Since March, we have received the names of eight more people who died in suspicious and unexplained circumstances while being detained by security forces. This makes an extraordinary total of fifteen such deaths during the first eleven months of 1991. (Helsinki Watch received reports of seven deaths in detention during 1990.)**

**Of the eight most recent deaths, two died in Ankara, two in Istanbul, and four in outlying areas, mainly in southeast Turkey. In one of the cases, two security force members are on trial for the detainee's death.**

**The eight deaths reported since March are:**

### **Imran Aydin**

**Detained in Ankara as a political suspect on March 2, Imran Aydin died on March 3. Police reported that Aydin died while trying to flee from a house to which he was taken for "on-site inspection." The autopsy report stated that death was caused by bleeding in the pancreas.**

### **Haydar Altun**

**Haydar Altun, a member of the PKK (the separatist Kurdish Workers' Party waging guerrilla warfare in southeast Turkey), died in March. Security forces reported that he had been killed in a clash during a raid on a PKK camp within Iraqi territory. On May 14, the Turkish Human Rights Foundation reported that Altun's mother had been told that her son had been captured alive and had died during torture while detained by security forces.**

### **Mustafa Hengiz**

**Mustafa Ilengiz was reportedly killed by special team members of the security forces on April 2 in Cicekalan village of Pazarcik District, Maras. On June 22, a court case was filed against special team members Halil Ibrahim Cura and Esen Akbulut for his death. The trial is continuing.**

### **Hasim Sincar**

**Hasim Sincar was detained as an ordinary criminal suspect in Bingol, Solhan, on April 4. He died at Solhan Gendarme Station where he was being interrogated. Officials reported that death was due to a heart attack.**

### **Veli Geles**

**Veli Geles was detained as a political suspect in Ankara on April 1. On April 5, his body was taken to the Emergency and Traffic Hospital. An autopsy revealed three gunshot wounds. Police reported that Geles was shot while attempting to flee from a house to which he had been taken for "on-site inspection." His family was notified of his death a month later.**

### **Alaadin Kurekci**

**Detained in Istanbul on May 16 as a theft suspect, Alaadin Kurekci was sent to a hospital in a coma on May 17. He died on May 20. A relative reported seeing him in the hospital with purple bruises and marks of beating around his ears.**

### **Osman Ekinci**

**A shepherd, Osman Ekinci, was detained on July 20 by three soldiers attached to the gendarmerie post at Gorendoruk; there he was beaten with three others for about 13 hours. His body was then returned to his village with many traces of injuries.**

### **Yucel Ozen**

**Twenty-six-year-old Yucel Ozen was detained on charges of theft in November in Istanbul. On November 12, Ozen was hospitalized at Taksim Emergency Hospital after falling into a coma at Beyoglu Security Directorate. He died in the hospital on November 24. His lawyer charged that he had been tortured in detention and demanded an investigation.**

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**Torture in Turkey usually takes place in special sections of police stations during the initial interrogation of a suspect. Human rights activists and lawyers who represent defendants continue to tell Helsinki Watch that between 80 and 90 percent of political suspects and 50 percent of detainees suspected of ordinary crimes report having been tortured in detention.**

**Torture includes suspension by the arms or wrists while naked; the use of electric shock to sensitive parts of the body; directing highly-pressurized water at victims; falaka (beating the soles of the feet), and other horrifying techniques.**

**Torture is not confined to adults; Helsinki Watch recently interviewed nine children between the ages of 13 and 17 who had been tortured by police.**

**Unlike the situation in police stations, torture in prisons subsided after 1984, but in recent months Helsinki Watch has again received reports of mass beatings with truncheons and wooden sticks in prisons.**

### **Recommendations**

**For many years, Helsinki Watch has been reporting on the routine use of torture in Turkey and has urged the abolition of torture, suggesting specific steps that the government could take to accomplish that goal. A new government was recently elected in Turkey. On November 25, Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel announced the new program of his coalition government; one provision stated that torture is an inhuman crime that will be abolished. Helsinki Watch urges the new government to carry out this promise, and, more specifically, to:**

- **Acknowledge the pattern of torture in police detention centers and take steps to end it.**
- **Enforce a September 1989 decree that guaranteed detainees the right to be represented by attorneys from the moment of detention; the provisions of this decree have never been carried out.**
- **Prohibit the use in court of confessions obtained by torture.**
- **Increase the possible sentences for the crime of torture.**
- **Prosecute torturers.**

- **Allow the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international organizations to visit detainees and prisoners on a regular basis.**

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*This report was written by Lois Whitman.*

*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 Chair is Robert L. Bernstein; Vice Chairs, Jonathan Fanton and Alice H. Henkin; Executive Director, Jeri Laber; Deputy Director, Lois Whitman; Washington Representative, Catherine Cosman; Staff Counsel, Holly Cartner; Research Associates, Ivana Nizich and Rachel Denber; Associates, Sarai Brachman, Pamela Cox, and Elisabeth Socolow.*

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*Helsinki Watch is affiliated with the International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, which is based in Vienna.*