

**PUBLIC**

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To: Medical professionals  
From: Medical Office / Western Europe Sub-regional Team  
Date: 8 February 2000

### ***MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION***

**Prosecution of doctors  
*Dr Veli Lök*  
TURKEY**

**Keywords:** freedom of expression / harassment of human rights defenders

#### **Summary**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the prosecution of Prof Veli Lök, an orthopaedic surgeon and the Izmir Representative of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT). He will appear before the court on 11 February 2000 for making a statement in connection with the case of Dr Alp Ayan and Günseli Kaya. Dr Ayan and Ms Kaya, both working for the HRFT, were recently imprisoned because they tried to attend the funeral of one of the prisoners killed in Ankara Closed Prison last September. Prof Lök is accused of "publishing his opinion about the decisions taken by the court before the trial has been concluded with a final decision" under Article 30/2 of the Press Law. The first hearing of the trial will be held at Izmir Penal Court of First Instance No 2 on 11 February 2000.

Amnesty International believes that the charges against Prof Veli Lök and several other doctors who have been prosecuted in recent years for activities consistent with medical ethics, represent a pattern of intimidation by the Turkish Government in order to prevent doctors from exercising their profession impartially and independently for Human Rights cases or organizations. The organization is therefore calling for all charges against Prof Lök to be dropped.

#### **Recommended Actions**

Please send appeals on professional letter head paper to the addresses below:

- introducing yourself and your professional background. You may also mention that you are a member of Amnesty International's health professional network;
- expressing concern for the repeated pattern of intimidation against doctors in Turkey;
- calling for the charges against Prof Dr Veli Lök to be dropped.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow-up letter seeking a response. Please send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat [attn: medical team] and check with your national coordinator or the medical team if you send appeals after 31 March 2000.

#### **ADDRESSES**

Mr Bulent Ecevit

Prime Minister  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Basbakanlik  
06573 Ankara, Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 417 0476  
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Professor Hikmet Sami Turk  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Adalet Bakanligi  
06659 Ankara, Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 417 3954 or 418 5667  
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Osman Durmus  
Minister of Health and Social Welfare  
Ministry of Health and Social Welfare  
Saglik ve Sosyal Yardim Bakanligi  
06434 Ankara, Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 431 4879  
Salutation: Dear Minister

**If you can only write to one address, please send your appeal to the Minister of Justice.**

## COPIES

**Please send copies of your letters to the addresses below and to the diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country or to the nearest Turkish embassy.**

Dr Sema Piskinsut  
President of the Parliamentary  
Human Rights Commission  
Insan Haklari Inceleme Komisyonu Baskani  
Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi  
Ankara, Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 420 5394  
Salutation: Dear President

Human Rights Foundation [TIHV]  
Izmir Branch  
1432 Sokak No:5, Daire:10, 35230  
Alsancak-IZMIR  
Phone: (232) 463 46 46  
Fax: (232) 463 46 46  
E-mail: [tihvizm@turk.net](mailto:tihvizm@turk.net)

Mr Mehmet Ali Irtemcelik  
State Minister with responsibility for Human  
Rights  
Devlet Bakani  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Basbakanlik  
06573 Ankara, Turkey  
Fax: + 90 312 417 0476  
Salutation: Dear Minister

Human Rights Association [IHD]  
Tunalihilmi Cad. 104/4  
Kavaklidere  
Ankara  
Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 4259547  
E- <mailto:ihd@tr-net.net.tr>

Human Rights Foundation [TIHV]  
Menekse 2. sokak 16/6  
06440 Kizilay  
Ankara  
Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 425 4552  
E - <mailto:tihv@tr-net.net.tr>

Turkish Medical Association  
Mithatpasa Cad. 62/15-17-18  
06420 Yenisehir  
Ankara  
Turkey  
Fax: +90 312 417 2672  
E - <mailto:TBO@Servis2.Net.tr>

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**MEDICAL CONCERN**  
**Prosecution of doctors**  
**Professor Veli Lök**  
**TURKEY**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the prosecution of Prof Veli Lök, an orthopaedic surgeon and the Izmir Representative of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT). He will appear before the court on 11 February 2000 for making a statement in connection with the case of Dr Alp Ayan and Günseli Kaya. Dr Ayan and Ms Kaya, both working for the HRFT, were recently imprisoned because they tried to attend the funeral of one of the prisoners killed in Ankara Closed Prison last September. Prof Lök is accused of "publishing his opinion about the decisions taken by the court before the trial has been concluded with a final decision" under Article 30/2 of the Press Law. The first hearing of the trial will be held at Izmir Penal Court of First Instance No 2 on 11 February 2000.

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**Case details**

Prof Veli Lök is an orthopaedic surgeon, now retired. He was born in Izmir in 1932 and he graduated from Istanbul University Medical Faculty in 1956. He started to work on documentation of signs of torture and medical treatment of torture survivors in 1987 when the Human Rights Association (HRA) in Turkey was founded. He is a founding member of the HRFT and became Izmir representative for the Foundation in 1991.

On 31 October 1999 the daily *Cumhuriyet* published a statement made by Prof Lök titled "They are made to pay for their fight against torture" in which he expressed concern about the Ayan / Kaya case and similar examples. As a result, a prosecution has been instituted against Prof Lök, Bahri Akkan, spokesperson of the Izmir Democracy Platform who made similar comments on the trial, and Fikret Ilkiz, editor in chief of the daily *Cumhuriyet*.

**Background**

*"Turkey regards the protection and development of human rights and fundamental freedoms as a requirement of the principle of a democratic, secular welfare state governed by the rule of law and respectful of the human rights enshrined in the Constitution."*<sup>1</sup>

While the Turkish government makes optimistic statements like the one cited above, human rights defenders, including doctors, are facing a completely different reality. The following cases illustrate the

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 3, Circular 1999/39 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, of the Follow-up report of the Turkish Government in response to the report of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) on its visit to Turkey

kind of legal pressure brought against those known for their work on human rights, especially on torture and medical treatment of victims of torture.

- ! Dr Alp Ayan, a psychiatrist working for the HRFT in Izmir, and Günseli Kaya (f), secretary of the HRFT Izmir office, were detained with 74 others in a village near Izmir on 30 September, when they tried to attend the funeral of one of 10 prisoners killed on 26 September in Ankara Central Closed Prison [see EUR 44/71/99, 8 December 1999]. They were held in prison for four months charged with disobeying police orders to end what they considered a demonstration. Both were released after the first hearing of the trial, held at Aliaga Penal Court of First Instance on 20 January 2000.
- ! Dr Cumhuri Akpınar. Accused and brought to trial, under Article 169 of the Turkish Penal Code, allegedly because his forensic reports aided an illegal organization. He was acquitted on 31 December 1999 by the Ankara State Security Court (SSC) [see EUR 44/07/99, 28 January 1999 and EUR 44/27/99, 15 March 1999].
- ! Dr Seyfettin Kizilkan. On 30 September 1999 the Diyarbakir SSC reportedly upheld its initial ruling sentencing Dr Kizilkan to 3 years and 9 months' imprisonment. The case is still being reviewed by the Appeal Court. Dr Seyfettin Kizilkan, then Chairperson of the Diyarbakir Medical Association and Chief Consultant of the Diyarbakir Social Security Hospital was charged with membership of an illegal organization and committed to Diyarbakir prison. He was then released pending decision of the Appeal Court on 17 June 1996. In 1998 the Appeal Court overturned this sentence [see EUR 44/94/96, 28 June 1996 and EUR 44/76/96, 5 June 1996].
- ! Dr Zeki Uzun. A gynaecologist and member of Izmir Medical Chamber Council of Doctors, Dr Uzun had been working as a volunteer in the HRFT Izmir branch Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for 6 years. In November 1999, he was arrested and held in detention for 6 days when he was allegedly tortured and subject to other forms of ill-treatment. Dr Zeki Uzun is accused of "aiding an illegal organization and sheltering its members" for providing treatment to two of his patients. The second hearing of his trial will take place on 24 February 2000.