



11 December 2002

To His Excellency

Subject: The ongoing Death Fasts (hunger strikes) in Turkey's prisons

In the statements Your Excellency has made to the press and public opinion, both Your Honour and your government have maintained on a number of different occasions that you give the highest priority to human rights. We want to tell you that we share your views. We defend human rights and above all the right of all human beings to live with their beliefs.

But solitary confinement is designed to prevent people from living with their beliefs. This is the case wherever you are in the world. It can be said that solitary confinement means death, holding beliefs can mean death. There are those resisting in Turkey's F-Type isolation prisons because they want to live with their beliefs. There being no alternative, they prefer death to this. You may not share the beliefs of those who are resisting. But this is not important. However, it is a duty to defend their right to live with their beliefs. We think that your governments bear a great responsibility. For despite the government of Turkey having solitary confinement in the prisons on its agenda for a long time, it actually came into being with the approval and support of Europe. On the subject of the prisons, haven't your governments supported Turkey's government since the middle of 1999, and isn't this the result? We do not want to make an analysis of this subject. However, there is a benefit in reminding you of this: the construction of the F-Type prisons was put forward as a pre-condition for Turkey's government applying to join the European Union. This support caused the building of the F-Type prisons to be speeded up. On December 19-22, 2000, the state in Turkey killed 28 prisoners and wounded hundreds more in a prison massacre that was also the biggest military operation it has carried out since the occupation of Cyprus in 1974. Your government gave the government of Turkey practical political and economic support for this massacre. The practical results of this continued support are ongoing deaths, torture and solitary confinement. You appreciate that the statements you have made are actually political responsibility. And this responsibility takes various forms, including remaining silent.

The Death Fast has gone on for 770 days: and the European governments have also

remained silent. The resistance will not end until solitary confinement comes to an end, as the last 770 days and at least 99 deaths have shown, and it is a mistake to expect that it will end. Indeed the lawyers of the resisting prisoners have received new statements that a ninth Death Fast Team is being readied.

Our expectations from either Your Honour or your governments that they will put a concrete end to solitary confinement have not been realised. Our beliefs are infinite and this resistance will only end when the right of human beings to live with their beliefs is confirmed. Nobody should expect anything different from the resisters. However, we think it is necessary to reduce the price paid in winning rights, since perhaps hundreds more may die. This is the same understanding that Your Honour and your governments have. What a pity that we human beings come from a country where death is the price paid for wanting to live with your beliefs. And this country is not so far from your own. We believe that human beings in Turkey have a right to defend living with their beliefs, and indeed human beings in every corner of the world, in your country and Your Honour have the same right. We want to believe that you think the same way.

The day that we address this letter to Your Excellency is the November 28, 2002, the 770th day of the Death Fast in the prisons of Turkey. This is the longest prison resistance in the world. The Death Fast resistance opposes solitary confinement in the F-Type prisons of Turkey.

Solitary confinement is about destroying the beliefs of human beings. Europe wanted the F-Type prisons. A massacre was used to bring the prisoners into the F-Type prisons. The F-Type prisons are continuing to kill. We request that you pay careful attention to that balance sheet:

99 people have died in the resistance which started on October 20, 2000. Twenty-eight people lost their lives on December 19-22, 2000 in a massacre committed in all the prisons in Turkey.

Forty-one people lost their lives in the Death Fast opposing solitary confinement inside the F-Type prisons. Eight members of TAYAD lost their lives outside the prisons while on the Death Fast they started in order to support the resistance. Ten prisoners who had been released lost their lives while continuing the resistance outside the prisons. Four people lost their lives by setting themselves on fire to protest against solitary confinement in the F-Type prisons. One person in Germany died after setting himself on fire. One person in Holland died as a result of being attacked by fascists from Turkey. Two people in Istanbul lost their lives in sacrifice actions. Four people (one of them TAYAD member Arzu Guler, who was on the Death Fast) lost their lives in a police attack on November 5, 2001 on the Istanbul district of Kucukarmutlu.

And to these can be added two people who committed suicide in the F-Type prisons and one who died while receiving treatment after being released. Nobody knows the exact figure but we can add that it is estimated about 400 people have lost their memory or been handicapped as a result of force-feeding, developing the Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome. So we can state that this about 500 people.

Your Excellency,

we hope in all earnestness that you will receive this letter. We are ready to provide every kind of document and information that you wish. Moreover you can also obtain information through diplomatic channels. Our only aim is to put a stop to the deaths. You have political and human responsibility on this subject. We think that you will do what is necessary.

With the deepest respect

Tayad Komite

Veli Bahşı

