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First UA: 105/24 Index: EUR 44/8855/2024 Türkiye of December 16, 2024

TÜRKIYE

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE NIMET TANRIKULU DETAINED ON BASELESS CHARGES

On November 26, police detained Nimet Tanrikulu, a well-known human rights advocate, from her home in Istanbul. After a brief detention at a local police station, she was transferred to the anti-terrorism branch of the Ankara Security Directorate.

Four days later, on November 30, Nimet was placed in pre-trial detention, accused of “membership in a terrorist organization.” She is now being held in Ankara’s Sincan Women’s Prison.

Amnesty International believes these accusations lack basis and considers her detention arbitrary. Authorities must release Nimet Tanrikulu immediately and ensure her rights are protected.

Write to the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor urging the authorities to:

- Immediately release Nimet Tanrikulu, unless they can promptly present an indictment based on clear, unclassified evidence that proves she has committed an internationally recognized offense.

Write to:

Mr. Gökhan Karaköse
Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor
Hacı Bayram Veli Mahallesi
Atatürk Bulvarı No:40
Sıhhiye/Ankara, Türkiye
Email: ankaracbs@adalet.gov.tr
Salutation: Dear Chief Public Prosecutor,

And copy:

His Excellency Can Dizdar
Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye
197 Wurtemberg Street
Ottawa, ON K1N 8L9
Tel: (613) 244-2470 Fax: (613) 789-3442
Email: embassy.ottawa@mfa.gov.tr

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nimet Tanrikulu, a founding member of the Human Rights Association, has been a dedicated advocate for human rights in Türkiye for decades. She has worked tirelessly to expose violations and campaign for truth, justice, and accountability. Her activism includes work with the Saturday Mothers/People, a group of families and supporters seeking answers about victims of enforced disappearances.

On November 26, police raided her home in the early hours and detained her as part of a criminal investigation under a secrecy order. She was taken to Ankara by officers from the anti-terrorism branch of the Ankara Security Directorate. Alongside Nimet, 12 others, including politicians and trade unionists, were detained as part of the same investigation.

On November 30, Nimet and eight others were placed in pre-trial detention under Article 314/2 of the Turkish Penal Code, accused of "membership in a terrorist organization." The remaining four detainees were released with restrictions, including travel bans and reporting requirements.

Authorities have a duty to ensure that investigations and prosecutions are not misused to silence human rights defenders. These actions not only harm individuals like Nimet Tanrıku but also discourage others from speaking out against human rights abuses. This misuse of anti-terrorism laws and other charges to stifle legitimate dissent has been well-documented in Türkiye. Prominent journalists, academics, and activists have faced arbitrary detentions and unfair trials, often resulting in lengthy prison sentences.

States are obligated to protect human rights defenders, ensuring they can work freely and without fear. This includes preventing misuse of criminal investigations to target them, as outlined in the ****UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders****. Such protections are essential for a society where individuals can report violations and advocate for justice without fear of retaliation.

The arbitrary detention of Nimet Tanrıku undermines Türkiye's commitment to human rights and sends a chilling message to others working to uphold justice. Her immediate release and the creation of a safe, enabling environment for human rights defenders are crucial steps toward safeguarding freedom and accountability.

Please take action as soon as possible until February 10, 2025! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.