**Report about Torture Practices in Turkey**

**To:** 65th session of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

**From:** Maat for Peace, Development, and Human Rights, Organization with special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, which is subordinated to the United Nations.

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**Preface**

**Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights** (Egypt) is submitting this report in the context of its interest in promoting respect for human rights in the Middle East region. Hence, this report is based on a methodology based on the international obligations of the Republic of Turkey by ratifying international conventions, including the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, as well as the collection and classification of available information on the human rights situation in Turkey from various sources in order to prepare this report.

As the ongoing state of emergency in the Turkish Republic after the failed coup, which was firstly initiated on the evening of 15 July 2016, have created a ground for human rights violations. Whereas, the opposition was relentlessly suppressed, and those who have targets on their backs included; journalists, political activists, and human rights defenders. Also, the cases of torture continued to be reported, and the prevailing climate of impunity prevented the initiation of an effective investigation into the committed human rights violations by State officials.

Turkey has been a State Party to the United Nations Convention against Torture since the 25th of January 1988, and acceded to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 2011. That Convention, which affirms that the recognition of the equal and inalienable rights of all human beings is the basis for the establishment of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. It also takes into consideration the incumbent obligation upon States under the Charter of the United Nations, in particular article 55, which requires the promotion of respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Furthermore, the Convention against Torture clearly prohibits specific practices, especially in the cases where these practices are implemented for any reason based on any kind of discrimination. Moreover, the International Law on Human Rights obligates Turkey to ensure the protection of detainees from being subjected to torture before or after the attempted coup, and this is whether the reason behind their arresting was their alleged relationship to the Gulen movement and the other groups, or not. While, this supposed to take place through condemning all acts of violence and abuse against these individuals, and punishing those who do so.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**Torture practices against opponents**

Despite government allegations of the absolute intolerance with torture, and allowing detainees early access to counsel, which was initially abolished in the light of Turkey's emergency, the government has not acted to crack down the extensive rise of arbitrary police detention practices over the past year. As documenting the number of cases, of which involves torture and ill-treatment in the post-coup period was a pretty difficult task, because of the Government's absolute denial of any cases of torture by the government, the lack of investigations into allegations, the blocking of medical reports, the denial of effective counseling, the isolation of detainees, the obstruction of outgoing correspondence, and the reduction of the communication with lawyers and family members.

Thereof, several human rights organizations have identified several cases from court records and other sources, in which detainees have been complaining about ill-treatment of public prosecutors, or during court hearings. However, the allegations have not been properly investigated. On the other hand, the official figures demonstrate that more than 150,000 people were detained by the police in 2016, with charges of terrorist offenses, membership of armed groups, or the involvement in the attempted coup in July 2016. The reported cases also showed that persons at greatest risk of torture were those who are detained for alleged links to what the courts described as the Fathullah Gulen organization, which is blamed by the government for the attempted coup, or the armed PKK.[[3]](#footnote-3)

While the Turkish police in Ankara and Istanbul also detained the detainees in an enervated physical conditions for up to 48 hours, depriving them of food, water, and medical care, and verbally insulting and threatening them. In the worst cases, some were severely beaten and tortured, and even more, some were raped.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Hence, those who are arrested, their families, the media and human rights defenders have documented the following methods of torture and ill-treatment: Severe battery and sexual assault, including rape, starvation, deprivation of water and treatment, forced labor for up to 48 hours, verbal assaults and threats, handcuffing behind the back for prolonged periods, hanging with a rope tied to the ceiling along with shackling and electric shocks, nail removal, penetration of objects including bottles in the anus, using air conditioners for ill-treatment (hot air in the day and cool at night), pouring of ice water, and dripping of dissolved plastic on the hands and feet. There are also allegations of torture and ill-treatment from almost everywhere, committed in places of legal and illegal detention, prisons, police stations and gymnasiums (gymnasiums, sports centers, warehouses, stables, abandoned buildings, health clubs and other places where individuals are deprived of their liberty.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Moreover, in August 2017, non-governmental organizations reported that soldiers and police officers have been beating at least 30 persons in the village of Altansu / Sabatan in Turkey's southeastern Hakkari province after a clash with the PKK, as two policemen were killed. According to witnesses thereof, villagers were driven out of their homes and subjected to arbitrary arrest and battery in the vicinity of the village, and therefrom, ten of them were detained by the police. Hence more, the social media provided pictures of the villagers’ injuries, of which were resulted by the battery thereof. While, a statement issued by the provincial governor's office denied all the torture allegations, and constantly stressed that news reports supporting the allegations contained terrorist allegations.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Furthermore, during the year 2017, reports of torture and ill-treatment were widely disseminated, particularly from persons detained under the Anti-Terrorism Act, what indicates a huge regression to the long-standing development. Also, a lot of battery reports of detainees and placing them in painful positions for extended periods of time, as well as reports of threatening them of rape, threatening lawyers, and obstruction of medical examinations were widely spread. In addition to credible reports of alleged State perpetrators who abducted men in at least six cases and kept them in undisclosed detention centers in conditions that could amount to enforced disappearance. One of them appeared in an official detention center, and three others were released after periods between two to three months. Hence, they were all fired from their jobs in the public sector because of their connections with Gulen.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Despite the lack of accurate statistical data on the allegations of torture and ill-treatment, still, the repeated and logical evidence as well as the horrific testimonies of the victims’ relatives reflect the extensive and routine use of torture and ill-treatment. Moreover, Human rights organizations, businessmen, and members of Parliament have expressed concern over the exaggerated cruelty of torture methods. Especially, since government representatives did not care much about hiding most of the evidence of ill-treatment and torture, of which were revealed by the press, or social media. Along with the Turkish opposition parties, which explicitly stated that the government would ignore the allegations of the existence of torture and the ill-treatment, as long as the victims are supporters of the Gulen movement.

**Recommendations**

* The Turkish authorities should urgently demonstrate their commitment to support the absolute prohibition of torture, and should ensure prompt and effective investigations with security forces, intelligence services, and all other officials who are allegedly committed incidents of torture, ill-treatment, or unlawfully deprived detainees of their liberty.
* Activating related anti-torture laws in prisons and places of detention to prevent impunity.
* Stop using torture practices against detainees and hold those who carry out these practices accountable, in order to prosecute them.

1. - [https://mar7aba.com.tr/تركيا-توقع-اتفاقية-الأمم-المتحدة-لمنا/](https://mar7aba.com.tr/%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%82%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%81%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%85%D9%86%D8%A7/). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. - Turkey after the coup: state of emergency, torture and impunity, Zaman newspaper, February 5, 2017, [https://www.zamanarabic.com/2017/02/05/تركيا-بعد-الانقلاب-حالة-الطواريء-والت/](https://www.zamanarabic.com/2017/02/05/%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA/) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. - Detainees in Turkey after the attempted coup are tortured and raped, CNN Arabic, July 27, 2016, <https://www.cnn.com/world/2016/07/27/turkey-coup-attempt-aftermath> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. - Turkey after the coup: state of emergency, torture and impunity, Zaman newspaper, February 5, 2017, [https://www.zamanarabic.com/2017/02/05/تركيا-بعد-الانقلاب-حالة-الطواريء-والت/](https://www.zamanarabic.com/2017/02/05/%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%82%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A1-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. - Amnesty International Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Turkey 2017/2018, January 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/turkey/report-turkey/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. - World Report of the Human Rights Situation in Turkey 2017, Human Rights Watch, January 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/en/world-report/2018/country-chapters/313872> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)