

Hunger Strikes in Turkish Prisons: Information Note
Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Prison Committee
6 April 2017



The hunger strike protests of political prisoners in Turkish penitentiary institutions have reached a critical point. The protest was initiated in İzmir Şakran High Security Prison on 15 February 2017 to draw attention to gross human rights violations and inhumane living conditions in prisons, the isolation on the imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan, and Erdoğan-AKP government's renewed politics violence and war in the Kurdish issue. It soon spread to other prisons across Turkey.

- Currently, as of April 6, about one hundred political prisoners continue indefinite and non-alternate hunger strikes in eight different penitentiary institutions. Thirty-four of the protesting prisoners are women.

Indefinite Hunger Strikes (6 April 2017)			
Start Date	Prison Facility	# of Prisoners on Strike	On day #
15 February	Şakran T2	8	51
15 February	Şakran T3	5	51
22 February	Şakran Women's Ward	5	44
23 February	Sincan Women's Ward	7	43
1 March	Şakran T4	8	37
08 March	Tekirdağ T-1	10	30
15 March	Tarsus Women's Ward	5	23
22 March	Şakran T4	7	16
27 March	Bolu F Type	10	11
30 March	Antalya L Type	5	8
1 April	Hatay T Type	11	6
3 April	Sincan Women's Ward	9	4
4 April	Kepsut	6	3
5 April	Menemen	4	2



- In addition to the indefinite and non-alternate protests tabled above, political prisoners carry out five-day-long alternating solidarity hunger strikes in several other facilities since March 15.
- The solidarity hunger strikes of imprisoned HDP MPs Ayhan Bilgen, former HDP Parliamentary Group Spokesperson, Meral Daniş Beştaş and Nihat Akdoğan have reached its sixth-day. In her note to the press on April 4, Ms Beştaş recorded the following:

Prisoners at Şakran and Tekirdağ prisons are now at the edge of death. Our hunger strike, started on 1 April 2017, is but simply a call [to the authorities] 'to be abide by law'. Nevertheless, the demands of prisoners on hunger strike are nothing but humane and legal.

We, the imprisoned deputies, have no demands for ourselves. Our one and only demand is the ending of inhumane and derogatory practices targeting prisoners [in Turkey].

- Whereas prison administrations have so far remained non-responsive to these calls, arbitrary pressures on protesting prisoners continue extensively, as further source of risk to their health and lives. According to reports received by HDP Prison Committee:
 - In Tarsus Prison, where hunger strike is on its 23rd day, prisoners are not allowed to access B12 vitamin despite continuous demands.
 - On 16 March 2017, prisoners at Van T Type (High Security) Prison were transferred to Tekirdağ Prison, in westernmost Turkey, on the ninth day of their hunger strikes. Their hunger strike still continues. Another group of protesting prisoners at Van Prison were transferred to Bandırma F Type Prison, again in western Turkey, reportedly under continuous physical harassment.
 - On 3 April 2017, relatives of prisoners at İzmir Şakran T4 Prison were verbally and physically harassed and attacked by prison guards.

Notes:

Reports are based on the data gathered from HDP deputies, Human Rights Association (IHD), Prisons Solidarity Initiative (ZDI), Libertarian Lawyers Platform (ÖHP), Progressive Lawyers Association (ÇHD), Union of Turkish Doctors (TTB), and several other non-governmental organizations advocating for prisoners' rights, and confirmed news in the media and press. As HDP Prison Committee, we are following the hunger strikes very closely. We will continue to update the national and international public about hunger strikes and prison conditions.

