

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Legal proceedings against Amnesty International Turkey should stop

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about legal proceedings that have been brought against Amnesty International Turkey. Amnesty International Turkey's bank accounts have been frozen since January 2007 and on 30 May 2007 a decision of "illegal fundraising" was issued by the local authorities from the district of Beyoğlu, Istanbul.

Since January Amnesty International Turkey has been taking steps with the authorities to try and resolve the issue of the frozen bank accounts and in challenging the "illegal fundraising" decision.

Amnesty International does not seek or accept money from governments or political parties for its work in documenting and campaigning against human rights abuses. Its funding depends on the contributions of its worldwide membership and fundraising activities.

Amnesty International sections and structures worldwide regularly carry out street fundraising activities (known as "face-to-face" activities) and request donations on their websites, the basis upon which Amnesty International Turkey now faces legal proceedings.

The organization fears that the freezing of Amnesty International Turkey's bank accounts may amount to a tactic of harassment intended to impede its legitimate fundraising activities. The organization is concerned that the incident has occurred in the context of increased tensions in the country in which human rights defenders are particularly vulnerable, and amounts to a violation of the rights to free expression and association.

Amnesty International has written to the government of Turkey in urging it to take steps to ensure that Amnesty International Turkey's bank accounts are unfrozen immediately, to ensure an immediate end to these unfounded proceedings against Amnesty International Turkey, and to ensure that staff and volunteers there may continue their work unhindered.

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