

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER IMPRISONED

On 26 November, prominent human rights defender Nimet Tanrikulu was detained from her home by the police in Istanbul. After a short period of detention at a police station, she was transferred to the anti-terrorism branch of the Ankara Security Directorate. Following four days in police custody, Nimet Tanrikulu was remanded in pre-trial detention on 30 November, accused of "membership to a terrorist organization". She is currently held at Ankara's Sincan women's prison. Amnesty International believes that her detention on what appear to be baseless accusations is arbitrary, and she should be released immediately.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

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

Dear Chief Public Prosecutor,

I write to express my deep concern at the arrest and ongoing detention of the prominent human rights defender **Nimet Tanrikulu** on 30 November 2024, who is currently held at Ankara's Sincan women's prison, accused of "membership of a terrorist organization" as part of an investigation on which there is a secrecy order.

Amnesty International examined the questions Nimet Tanrikulu was asked during interrogation, namely her historic travel, participation in civil society events relating to Kurdish human rights issues during the 2013/14 peace process, mobile phone signals from same base station as other individuals and witness statements, none of which could be considered on their own as constituting material links with an armed group.

Amnesty International are deeply concerned that Nimet Tanrikulu is being maliciously investigated due to her human rights work. The authorities in Türkiye frequently misuse counter-terrorism investigations to silence those who defend human rights, and Nimet Tanrikulu has herself faced such malicious investigations on at least two past occasions.

We call on you to request Nimet Tanrikulu's immediate release, unless prosecuting authorities are able to immediately provide an indictment that relies on unclassified material to demonstrate that she is guilty of an internationally recognisable offence.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Nimet Tanrıkulu is a prominent human rights defender and founding member of Human Rights Association who has been active in Türkiye's human rights community for several decades including campaigning with Saturday Mothers/People, the group of relatives of victims of enforced disappearances and their supporters for truth, justice and accountability.

On 26 November, police raided Nimet Tanrıkulu's home in early hours and detained her in the context of an ongoing criminal investigation which is subject to a secrecy order. On the same day, she was transferred to Ankara by officers from the Ankara Security Directorate's anti-terrorism branch. 12 others, including politicians, trade unionists and others were also detained in the context of the same investigation. On 30 November, Nimet Tanrıkulu and eight others were remanded in pre-trial detention under Article 314/2 of the Turkish Penal Code for 'membership of a terrorist organization' by the Ankara Criminal Judgeship of Peace No. 4. The remaining four were released, with judicial controls including reporting to a police station and foreign travel ban.

States are duty bound to protect human rights defenders in the course of their work to prevent human rights violations, report them when they occur, and to provide an enabling environment for their work as defenders. Authorities must ensure criminal investigations, detentions and prosecutions are not misused to target human rights defenders as such proceedings are unjust for the individuals and may create a chilling effect on all those who speak out about possible human rights abuses. States' duty to protect and promote human rights includes the creation of this enabling environment for human rights defenders as outlined in the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

In the past, Amnesty International has [documented](#) how anti-terrorism laws and trumped-up coup related charges have been used to target and silence peaceful, legitimate dissent in Türkiye. Prominent journalists, academics, human rights defenders and other civil society actors were subjected to arbitrary detention, prosecutions and, if found guilty in unfair trials, face long sentences.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Turkish, English.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 10 February 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Nimet Tanrıkulu (she/her)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

His Excellency Mr Osman Koray Ertay
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