



**Grand National Assembly of Turkey
Human Rights Commission**

ANKARA

No.: 2008/21

Subject: Request to ensure the safety of conscientious objector Mehmet Bal, who is subjected to violence and intense threats in Hasdal Military Prison and request to institute the necessary investigation to determine and punish the perpetrators.

We, the lawyers of the Human Rights Association, who were appointed as the lawyers of conscientious objector **Mehmet Bal** within the frame of the task and program to struggle against rights violations, had the possibility to meet our client on 10 June 2008 at 3 PM in Gümüşsuyu Military Hospital. Bal was imprisoned on 8 June 2008 at 8.30 PM on the grounds of being a deserter.

We determined in our meeting with Mehmet Bal, that he was subjected to intense torture and beaten within the approximately 24 hours he spent in Hasdal Military Hospital.

Mehmet Bal was first subjected to intense beatings in the Beşiktaş Gendarmerie Station, where he was held after detained until the morning of 9 June, Monday. We already informed the public about this situation in our press conference held at our association this morning.

Unfortunately the meeting with our client today confirmed our initial concerns and anxiety.

Our request to meet our client was first turned down by the soldiers on duty. The soldiers later allowed us to meet him after they called back to the Hasdal Military Prison as a result of our insistence.

Our client, conscientious objector Mehmet Bal, was lying immobilized on a stretcher in the emergency room of Gümüşsuyu Military Prison. He told us, that he got physically attacked by other prison inmates in the ward of Hasdal Military Prison, with the consent and incitement of the officers in charge.

Mehmet Bal told us that he was accompanied to the ward by a petty officer, who was most probably the second ranking officer in the prison after the prison director. The petty officer instructed the other prisoners to “do what is necessary. You know what you have to do. Remind him of the prison rules”. He said, he was immediately attacked by the other prisoners, while they kept asking why he wasn't wearing a uniform and why he refuses to be a soldier.

Mehmet Bal told us that among the 20 inmates 5-6 persons, who he could identify, were especially brutal. He said that he was beaten with a 35-40 cm log, kicked and dragged half unconscious under cold water.

Mehmet Bal further told us that he can't move his right leg, waist and neck, that he feels contractions in these areas and heavy pain in his tailbone, which feels like broken. He also reported injuries and pain in his back.

While we were unable to examine him in detail in order to avoid hurting him any further, we could clearly observe obvious bruises, rashes and scratches on his uncovered neck, face, shoulder and hands.

Mehmet Bal told us that he received severe blows on his neck and that the left side of his neck got swollen and hurts. He reported to have auditory problems on both ears, but that his hearing already improved partially at the time of our talk. His eyes were becoming wet and itchy and that he had sight problems the day before, which were almost alleviated.



Conscientious objector Mehmet Bal stated that his life is not save in prison and that he holds no grievance to the imprisoned soldiers who beat him. They were incited against him, but weren't the ones really responsible. He informed us that he started hunger strike to protest the prison administration, which incited the prison inmate against him and cut his hear.

Mehmet Bal asked for help against further attacks incited by the prison administration for the case that he got sernt back to prison.

Mehmet Bal first refused treatment by military doctors out of protest, but ended his protest and started to accept their treatment now. We spoke with the military doctors who ensured us, that they will treat him, if he accepts. Their attitude seemed earnest to us.

We hope to receive definite information about the health situation of our cvlient after the medical examination.

Our impressions and conclusions: We are convinced that our client's safety is not warranted in prison, that there is a risk of physical disability, that he is suffering from severe pain due to the physical attacks, that he is concerned about similar attacks and that his concerns are valid.

We protest against this inhumane attack, which was carried out with the consent and incitement of the officers in charge in Hasdal Military Prison. We demand that Mehmet Bal is protected against probable physical and mental attacks, that an investigation will be instituted against the responsible perpetrators and ask your commission to convey this matter to the attention of the Parliament.

10.06.2008

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Information: The same matter was conveyed as a petition to the:
- National Defense Ministry.

Update: We were informed that Mehmet Bal was sent back to Hasdal Military Prison in the evening of the same day, 10 June 2008.