

# Turkey: Police kidnap hunger strikers from leftist band Grup Yorum

written by Anti-Imperialist Front  
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*Ibrahim Gökçek and Helin Bölek are members of the internationally known leftist music group Grup Yorum. They along with several of their comrades were*

*imprisoned by the regime of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Turkey is a NATO member and longtime vassal of U.S. imperialism, currently working with terrorist groups and U.S. forces to undermine Syrian sovereignty.*

*During their long imprisonment, Gökçek and Bölek went on a death fast (hunger strike to the death), along with another political prisoner, Mustafa Koçak. This is a tactic that has a long history among revolutionary political prisoners in Turkey. Gökçek and Bölek were recently released from prison on medical grounds but continue their death fast; Koçak remains in prison.*

Last night, March 11, 2020, Turkish police SWAT teams raided the Resistance House in the Kucuk Armutlu district of Istanbul.

Ibrahim Gökçek and Helin Bölek were there to continue their hunger strike to the death, until their demands were accepted. They want to live, but they want to live with dignity, a dignity that belongs to everyone. They are our barricade against Turkish fascism supported by Western imperialist powers.

The resistance house in Armutlu was stormed by heavily armed SWAT teams that forced everyone inside the house to lie down on the ground and then handcuffed them. The members of the SWAT teams said that the assault on the house was “aimed at conducting a search for evidence for a crime committed.”

After handcuffing everyone, SWAT team members forced Ibrahim Gökçek and Helin Bölek from the house. During the assault, SWAT hit Helin Bölek’s mother Aygul Bilgi and Kubra Sünnetçi, who were taking care of Helin and Ibrahim. The police arrested Yurdagül Gümüş, a former political prisoner, a veteran of the Dec. 19-22, 2000, prison massacre.

In addition to the Resistance House, SWAT teams stormed the local Alevita Worship House (Cem evi). The police threw away personal belongings in the ceremonial hall

and the temple table, and did not hesitate to raid the mortuary of the house of worship, where the corpse of a resident of the Kuchuk Armutlu neighborhood was located.

According to information available at this time, a total of six people were arrested during police raids.

### **Where are Ibrahim and Helin?**

Grup Yorum members İbrahim Gökçek and Helin Bölek, who have been on Death Fast for more than 260 days, and are now skin and bones, have been forcibly transported to the Sağlık Bilimleri Üniversitesi Hastanesi hospital in Istanbul. For now there is no certainty about what will be done to them, but they are at high risk of forced feeding.

No one was able to stay with them, even their close family members. The hospital is currently surrounded by a large deployment of police forces.

### **Hunger strike and forced feeding**

The hunger strike has been used by political prisoners around the world to oppose imprisonment policies, violation of rights and treatment incompatible with human dignity.

The hunger strike is an extreme weapon of jailed or persecuted rebels and revolutionaries, who have no other way to bring out their cries for freedom, to make known the often infamous and terrible conditions in which they are forced to live under the blows of repression.

Forced feeding consists of inserting a tube into the nose and throat through which a dense fluid is passed to the stomach. The tube is inserted into the nose and in some cases causes the prisoner to bleed or vomit blood.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture reminded authorities that “it is not acceptable to use threats, forced feeding or other types of physical or mental coercion against individuals who have chosen to use the extreme resource of hunger strike to assert their rights.”

Due to such interventions between 2000 and 2007 (hunger strike to the death against isolation prisons), many political prisoners in Turkey have completely lost their memories, have fallen ill with Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome [a serious neurological disorder], and some have been literally killed.

The responsibility and blame for the negative consequences that would result from a forced feeding operation carried out against the wishes of Ibrahim and Helin would belong to the doctors who carried out the operation and the police officers who forced them to do so.

Torture is a crime against humanity, it has no statute of limitations. During the previous Death Fast mass resistance, attempts were made against the participants to perform a forced medical intervention against their will. These attempts led to death, mutilation, or lasting adverse effects on the health of Death Fast resistance participants.

We say to all doctors to whom forced medical intervention has been proposed: forced medical intervention is a crime, it is against humanity, it is a method of torture, do not accept these proposals, do not become part of this act, do not commit a crime against the people!

Everything that may happen with Ibrahim and Helin is the responsibility of the doctors who agree to carry out forced medical intervention, the Istanbul Security Directorate (Regional Police Department), Interior Minister Soysuz Süleyman (Süleyman Soylu), and the political power as a whole.

Torture is not subject to a statute of limitations: the perpetrators will be held accountable for their actions. In case of forced medical intervention against the Death Fast resistance of Ibrahim and Helin, a very high price will be paid!

The fascist government of the AKP (the ruling party in Turkey) has once again demonstrated its enormous fear for the resistance of Grup Yorum.

To all of us who are outside, the decision taken cries out to not give up, to never stop fighting, to continue on our difficult path which is our own and that of all the revolutionary comrades who are with Helin and Ibrahim.

We demand the immediate release of all the revolutionary prisoners of the Turkish fascist prisons!

Freedom for the Turkish people and for all the peoples in struggle!

Freedom for all political prisoners!

We will not forget!

### **Grup Yorum demands:**

- End concert bans
- Free arrested members of the group and drop the accusations based on false police statements and lies
- End raids at Idil Culture Center
- Drop “terrorism lists” against Grup Yorum members

### **Mustafa Kocak demands:**

- A fair trial which is not based on lies and false statements without any evidence

Source: [Anti-Imperialist Front](#)

