



### E58 The Medicolegal Evaluation of Detention Procedures During the Recent State of Emergency in Turkey

*Alper Keten\**, Institut für Rechts-und Verkehrsmedizin, Heidelberg, CA 69115, GERMANY; *Johannes Nicolakis, MD*, Heidelberg Institute for Forensic and Traffic Medicine, Heidelberg 69115, GERMANY; *Ramazan Abaci, PhD*, Köln University, Köln, GERMANY

**Learning Overview:** After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand the recent human rights violations in custody in Turkey through the eyes of a well-educated group of people who migrated to Germany from Turkey.

**Impact on the Forensic Science Community:** This presentation will impact the forensic science community by drawing attention to troubles faced by well-educated refugees who migrated to Germany from Turkey.

The United Nations defined torture as infliction of physical or psychological harm by public officials or other persons acting in an official capacity. According to 2013 data from the United Nations, more than 50 million people are affected by forced displacement as a result of conditions such as war, oppressive regimes, or natural disasters. The rate of exposure to torture among those people is estimated to be between 5% and 35%. It is predicted that there are between 3–17 million victims of torture among people affected by forced displacement. However, a large portion of torture victims continue to live in their home counties where they are exposed to torture. In Turkey, the number of people directly exposed to torture is predicted to be several million. During the recent state of emergency in Turkey, many academicians, journalists, teachers, and doctors left Turkey as refugees, and mostly chose Europe to apply for asylum because of geographical closeness and a large Turkish community. This present study discusses the medicolegal examination of detainees in Turkey.

Eligible participants consisted of Turkish citizens aged 18 and older who fled Turkey during the recent state of emergency and applied for asylum in Germany. The participants were recruited with an announcement in a mobile messaging group which functions as support group for Turkish citizens in Germany. The participants answered a questionnaire, including demographical data and detention procedures, without disclosing their identity. Google® Forms was used to conduct the questionnaire with the participants.

A total of 294 people participated in the survey. Males comprised 284 (84.4%) of the participants, while 46 (15.6%) were female. There were 91 (31%) teachers, 30 (10.2%) academicians, 10 (3.4%) doctors, 33 (11.2%) members of the army or police, 19 (6.4%) businessman, 16 (5.4%) lawyers or prosecutors/judges, and 23 (7.8%) were from other occupational groups. All participants stated that they had not been previously sentenced or detained. When the educational backgrounds of the participants are considered, 166 (56.5%) participants had a bachelor's degree, 66 (22.4%) had a Master's degree, and 40 (13.6%) had a PhD or specialty in medicine. Researchers found that 91 (31%) participants were detained for four to seven days, while 100 (34.0%) participants were detained longer than seven days. Lawyers were not available for 120 (40.8%) of the participants and 257 (87.4%) were unable to meet with family members.

Physical trauma was reported by 57 (19.3%) participants during detention, while 219 (74.5%) participants stated that they were subjected to psychological violence. Most participants stated that they were refused medical help ( $n=273$ , 92.8%). Adequate nutrition during the detention process was not provided to 248 (84.4%) participants, while 155 (52.7%) participants pointed out that they were exposed to water restrictions. Restricted washing facilities were reported by 219 (74.4%) participants, while 166 (56.5%) participants reported inadequate access to toilets. Other reported measures included constant lighting ( $n=182$ , 61.9%), unsuitable cooling or heating ( $n=168$ , 57.2%), exposure to loud music ( $n=28$ , 9.5%), or verbal abuse ( $n=161$ , 54.8%).

In this present study, the reported detention procedures and practices do not comply with human dignity and appear to be a violation of the United Nations convention against torture. This cross-sectional study indicates that further studies regarding those practices should be conducted and these processes should be illustrated in detail. Because the study only included a small number of participants, further studies are needed to draw definite conclusions and to avoid sampling bias.

#### Turkey, Detention Procedures, Torture