

## PRESS RELEASE – THE OBSERVATORY

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### Turkey: Twelve years of judicial harassment against Pinar Selek

#### Call for international mobilisation on February 9, 2011

**Paris-Geneva, January 18, 2011. *The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), appeals for international mobilisation to call for the acquittal of Ms. Pinar Selek, a defender of women's rights and the rights of minorities.***

On February 9, 2011, Ms. **Pinar Selek**, a writer and sociologist who is an active defender of the rights of women, disadvantaged communities and the victims of discrimination, including street children and the Kurd and Armenian minorities, will again appear on trial before the Twelfth Chamber of the Istanbul High Criminal Court. Criminal proceedings against the Human Rights defender have continued since 1998.

In turn accused without proof of supporting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), then of causing a bomb to explode in Istanbul's Egyptian bazaar in 1998, Pinar Selek was imprisoned and tortured for two and a half years before being acquitted on two occasions for lack of evidence by the Twelfth Chamber of the Istanbul High Criminal Court. In fact, court's investigations largely confirmed the absence of any bomb and attributed the explosion to a gas leak; the defendant who had accused her during interrogation withdrew his statement during the trial. The prosecutor nevertheless appealed twice against these rulings and, the Court of Cassation twice granted his motion by annulling the first instance verdicts.

The general prosecutor of the Court of Cassation appealed against the rulings of the Court of Cassation. But on February 9, 2010, the High General Criminal Council of the Court of Cassation rejected the general prosecutor's appeal and in its judgment clearly stated that the ruling of the Court of Cassation was reasonable and called for a life prison sentence for Ms. Selek. The Twelfth Chamber of the Istanbul High Criminal Court will examine the case again. If it once more decides to acquit Ms. Selek, this ruling will again be brought before the High General Criminal Council of the Court of Cassation. The rights of Pinar Selek have been flouted for the last twelve years and she is neither able to lead a normal life nor to continue her human rights defence activities.

The Observatory calls on the authorities of Turkey to put an end to the judicial harassment faced by Pinar Selek in reprisal against her legitimate human rights defence activities. In addition, the Observatory invites recipients of this statement to write to the Turkish authorities to express their concern and solidarity with Pinar Selek.

Pinar Selek's video testimony (French):

[http://www.dailymotion.com/group/human\\_rights\\_defenders/1?mode=playlist#videoid=xgmcli](http://www.dailymotion.com/group/human_rights_defenders/1?mode=playlist#videoid=xgmcli)

Media kit prepared by Pinar Selek support committee (in French):

FIDH : [http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/dp\\_PINAR\\_SELEK.pdf](http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/dp_PINAR_SELEK.pdf)

OMCT : [Dossier de presse - Pinar Selek](#)

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