

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

30 May 2013
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Turkey: Amnesty International condemns use of excessive force against peaceful protestors

Amnesty International is concerned at the use of excessive force, including pepper spray, against peaceful protestors in a park in central Istanbul. At least one protestor was seriously injured, needing emergency surgery.

Gezi Park in Taksim, Istanbul, is facing demolition to make way for the construction of a shopping centre as part of a large scale regeneration of the area. Dozens of protestors opposed to the plans have been camping in the park for the last two days. In the early hours of 30 May, police moved in to destroy their tents, and used pepper spray to disperse the protestors. A 23 year-old protestor was seriously injured after sprayed with tear gas, kicked and hit by police when he was holding onto a tree.

Any decision to disperse an assembly should be taken only as a last resort and in line with the principles of necessity and proportionality. International standards require that in dispersing assemblies, police must avoid the use of force or, where that is not practicable, must restrict any such force to the minimum necessary. Amnesty International calls on the authorities to carry out a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the allegations of excessive and unnecessary use of force, and ensure that any law enforcement officials responsible for arbitrary or abusive use of force to be prosecuted. Amnesty International also calls on the authorities to ensure protestors' rights of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

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