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## İHD Special Report:

### Enforced Statements, Interviews, Informant-Making, and Abductions through Coercion and Threats in 2020

5 November 2020

The Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği –İHD) had shared with the public its special report on “Forced Statements, Interviews, Informant-Making, and Abductions through Coercion and Threats in 2019” along with a balance sheet on 13 January 2020.<sup>1</sup> In the special report, İHD had put forth that such practices had become a repressive policy of the state following the state of emergency (SoE) that was declared following the coup d’état attempt of 15 July 2016, while these practices had constituted multiple offenses including threat, insult, torture, deprivation of liberty, malfeasance in office that are prescribed in the Turkish Penal Code (TPC).

Applications filed before İHD and news reports reveal that such practices have been on the rise for the last three years, complaints have not been investigated effectively, and the perpetrators have not been punished.

İHD’s 2018 report on the issue had identified 160 such cases.<sup>2</sup> According to data presented in İHD’s 2019 report, a total of 71 persons lodged such applications before İHD’s central office and its branches: 8 persons before İHD’s central office, 36 before its İstanbul Branch, 8 before its Diyarbakır Branch, 8 before its İzmir Branch, 5 before its Ankara Branch, 1 before its Malatya Branch, and 5 before its Batman Branch. Further, İHD’s Documentation Center identified 13 persons who were abducted and subjected to enforced informant-making offers and threats while they were released without any official action taken. The center also identified another 61 persons who were subjected to forced informant-making offers and threats (in custodial and extra-custodial places), while 5 persons were offered the same while in prison by public prosecutors or other security officers. The total number was found to be 150 persons within this scope.

Only within the first ten months of 2020, however, 6 persons lodged applications before İHD’s central office on the same matter while 11 applied to its İstanbul Branch, 5 before its Diyarbakır Branch, 14 before its İzmir Branch, 5 before its Ankara Branch, 1 before its Mersin Branch, and 3 before its Van Branch making a total of

<sup>1</sup> İHD. “2019 Yılı Baskı ve Tehdit Yöntemleriyle İfade Alma, Mülakat Yapma, Ajanlaştırma ve Kaçırma Olaylarıyla İlgili Özel Rapor.” 13 January 2020. <https://www.ihd.org.tr/2019-yili-baski-ve-tehdit-yontemleriyle-ifade-alma-mulakat-yapma-ajanlastirma-ve-kacirma-olaylariyla-ilgili-ozel-rapor/> Also see the previous year’s special report on the same issue in English: <<https://ihd.org.tr/en/ihd-special-report-on-testimonies-interviews-forced-informant-making-through-methods-of-coercion-and-threat-and-abduction-cases/>>

<sup>2</sup> İHD. 2018 Report on Human Rights Violations in Turkey. 19 April 2019. < <https://ihd.org.tr/en/ihd-2018-report-on-human-rights-violations-in-turkey/>>

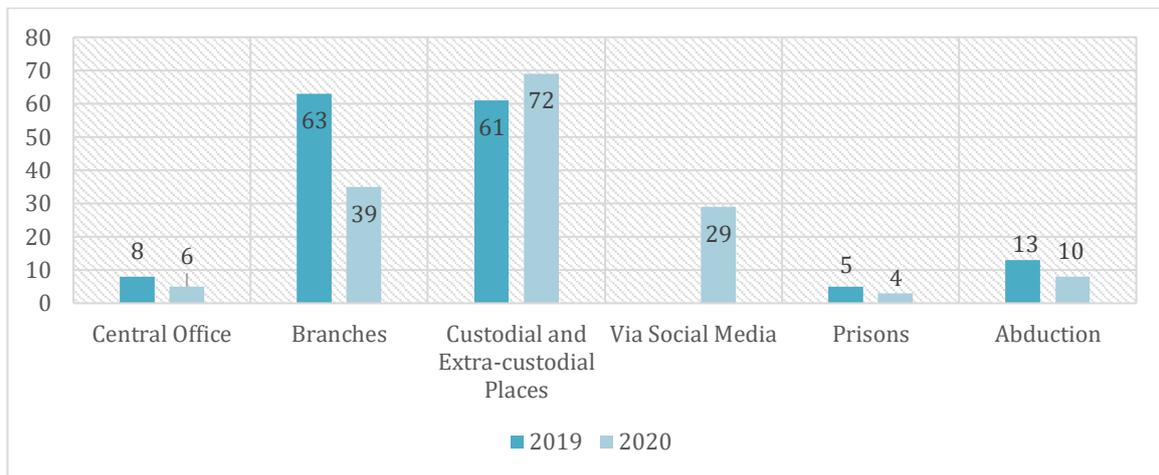
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**Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği-İHD) is a non-governmental, independent, and voluntary body. The association, which was founded in 1986 by 98 human rights defenders, today has 28 branches, 5 representative offices, and 7,945 members. İHD is the oldest and largest human rights organization in Turkey and its “sole and specific goal is to promote ‘human rights and freedoms.’”**

45 persons. İHD's Documentation Center identified 10 persons who were abducted and subjected to enforced informant-making offers and threats while they were released without any official action taken. The center also identified another 72 persons who were subjected to forced informant-making offers and threats (in custodial and extra-custodial places), while 4 persons were offered the same while in prison by public prosecutors or other security officers and 29 persons were threatened via social media. The total number was found to be 160 persons within this scope.

İHD believes that the actual figures are well above its findings but the victims seem to refrain from filing complaints before public prosecutors' offices or İHD for that matter.

**Figure 1: İHD 2019-2020 Data on Enforced Informant-Making and Abductions**



When one studies the applications, the summaries of which are presented in the appendix, it is seen that these repressive methods are being used mainly against students, members of political parties, members of the press or families of the detained. Intelligence and anti-terrorism officers threaten people and psychologically torture them with false promises of support pertaining to matters they are vulnerable about since they have access to private information about them. They threaten people with detention, abduction, torture or death and unlawfully force them to become informants saying that they would always pursue them. Sometimes these attempts go even further with persons abducted and subjected to physical and psychological torture for months on end without knowing their whereabouts.

İHD's 2019 report stated that no effective investigations were launched into the cases of Messrs. Salim Zeybek, Gökhan Türkmen, Erkan Irmak, Yasin Ugan, Özgür Kaya, and Mustafa Yılmaz who had been abducted and held for 7 months. Of these persons, Gökhan Türkmen and Yasin Ugan stated for the first time in 2020 that they had been abducted and tortured. Moreover, Mr. Yasin Ugan indicated in his statement that the persons who abducted and interrogated them through methods of torture for 7 months kept on visiting the prison they were held in and threatened them not to change their statements while the prison management organized these meetings that were held in the prison infirmary but the guards made him sit facing the wall thus he was not able to see the faces of those who abducted him. Although Messrs. Türkmen and Ugan told the courts in their statements about their accounts of abduction and 7-month torture, no effective investigations were launched into the matter.

Although it has been more than a year, there is still no information about the faith and whereabouts of Mr.

Yusuf Bilge Tunç, who was allegedly subjected to enforced disappearance on 6 August 2019, merely a month before the reappearance of Messrs. Salim Zeybek, Gökhan Türkmen, Erkan Irmak, Yasin Ugan, Özgür Kaya and Mustafa Yılmaz.

For instance in 2020, S. D., who lodged an application before İHD's Diyarbakır Branch on 16 January 2020 stated the following: *"I was taken under custody by the gendarmerie at my home on 20 December 2019 around 6 a.m. I was taken to an interview room in the evening of the first day. They both insulted me and accused me in the room. It took about an hour. When I refused their charges they resorted to violence. They did this with a baseball bat."*

Not only do law enforcement officers, but also other public officials are involved in threats and other coercive methods in some cases. For instance, M. T., an 11<sup>th</sup> grade high-school student in İzmir, lodged an application before İHD's İzmir Branch on 21 January 2020 and stated that he was summoned by the vice-principal on 13 January 2020 while he was in class. M. T. saw that three police officers were waiting for him in the vice-principal's office, who asked to talk to him in private, while the vice-principal left his office so that the officers could easily ask M. T. about his family and relatives and gave him their telephone numbers. In a similar application lodged before İHD's Diyarbakır Branch, A. Ç., a high-school teacher in Bismil, stated that the principal of his school called him telling that the vice-director of the provincial national education directorate wanted to see him. When he went to the vice-principal's office, he saw three plainclothes police officers there, the vice-principal left the office after handing his keys to the officers while the officers threatened him when they were left alone. According to A. Ç.'s account, police officers tried to persuade him to become an informant for them by saying "You, too, are a civil servant like us; we have to help each other out" and took his phone number. A similar incident happened in Ankara as well. S. S., who was taken under custody on 27 November 2019, stated that he was receiving phone calls non-stop after his release. After receiving a call, plainclothes police officers immediately approached him talking constantly about his daughter. The officers, according to S. S.'s account, threatened him about his daughter while at the same time urging him to cooperate with them. S. S. also stated that persons who identified themselves as police officers took him out a bus from Keçiören to Kızılay in Ankara on 5 February 2020 at 11.00 a.m. when the bus stopped at the Beşevler metro station, which was out of its route, and forced him to a café. The officers asked him about HDP (Halkların Demokratik Partisi – Peoples' Democratic Party) and attempted to threaten him by asking questions about his daughter, adding: *"We are responsible for your release from custody. If we want, we can get you detained again. We will see you again."*

Methods of repression and threat have gone so far that even the caucus members of the third largest party in Turkey are threatened. Serhat Aktumur, a member of HDP's Central Executive Board and the Co-Speaker of HDP's Youth Assembly, was abducted on 18 September 2020 by three people before the Kantar crossroads at Kayapınar District in Diyarbakır. According to Aktumur's account, these persons showed him their National Intelligence Agency identification cards and proposed to talk to him in the name of "conversation" (sohbet). When he refused to do so, he was battered and forced into a vehicle where he was subjected to violence. According to Aktumur's account, another person got into the vehicle before a shopping mall in Bağlar District and while he wanted to escape, he failed. Aktumur underlined that he was forced out of the vehicle while he was blindfolded in the urban forest on the way to Silvan and a person named "(Police) Captain Nihat" warned him not to visit İHD and stop talking to the press. Aktumur said that they threatened him saying *"If we see you here again, we will shoot you in the head"* and left him in the forest. Aktumur added that the same persons who had called him before told him that he should go to the police station the following day to see "Captain Nihat."

HDP deputies and politicians including Serpil Kemalbay, Murat Sarısaç, Hüseyin Kaçmaz, Habip Eksik, Nuran İmir, Semra Güzel, Murat Çepni, Hasan Özgüneş, Ayhan Bilgen, Veli Saçılık, Emine Çetiner and artists Gökhan

Yavuzel, Ferhat Tunç, Pinar Aydınlar along with author Gülfer Akkaya have been threatened by an account called “jitem.turkey”<sup>3</sup> on social media in 2020 on various dates which said “*Death will find you heval, wait; şewbaş. Code name Yeşil.*”<sup>4</sup>

It has also been reported that persons attempted to intimidate inmates in prisons through methods of repression and threats. For instance, the press reported on 3 July 2020 that sick prisoner Ekim Polat was being held in a solitary cell in Manisa Akhisar T-Type Prison where wardens threatened him with death. The news report alleged that the wardens told the petty offenders in the prison that Ekim Polat was “an enemy of the state” adding “you can do whatever you like to him.”

Moreover, perpetrators have threatened some of the victims saying that they would get in trouble if they applied to İHD. For instance, A. T., who lodged an application before İHD’s İstanbul Branch on 29 February 2020, stated that two plainclothes police officers stopped him as he was getting on the metrobus, took his identification card, and forced him into a vehicle saying that he had to give a statement. According to A. T.’s account, he was then taken to Topkapı cemetery where the officers asked him various questions and warned him not to go to İHD adding that someone they knew went to İHD, which, they said, was a mistake.

Although İHD communicated these applications to the Ministry of Interior, the Law Enforcement Supervision Commission, and to the Human Rights Inquiry Committee at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT), no effective investigations have been initiated. A sub-committee to supervise the law enforcement within the GNAT’s Human Rights Inquiry Committee has not been established yet. Although the Law Enforcement Supervision Commission was established within the Ministry of Interior in 2019, its activity report has not been issued yet.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Public prosecutors should take action against acts of abduction and enforced informant-making, which constitute multiple criminal offenses like threat, insult, torture, deprivation of liberty, malfeasance in office that are prescribed in the TPC while effectively investigating such complaints and the perpetrators should be identified to stand trial without the protection of the state. The Ministry of Interior and the Board of Prosecutors and Judges should fulfill their responsibilities as well.
- GNAT’s Human Rights Inquiry Commission should establish a sub-committee to supervise the law enforcement and review applications.
- The Law Enforcement Supervision Commission should take effective steps to deal with violations cited in this report.
- GNAT’s Security and Intelligence Commission should inquire the illegal activities of intelligence organizations by establishing a sub-committee by force of its mandate and responsibility originating in law and should take effective measures to prevent illegal activities cited in this report.
- The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) will be asked to visit Turkey on this matter. And applications will be lodged before the UN’s competent bodies.

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<sup>3</sup> JİTEM: Abbreviation for “Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele” is the Gendarmerie Intelligence Unit, widely known as the embodiment of the so-called Turkish “deep state.” “Yeşil” (a.k.a. Mahmut Yıldırım) is known to be one of the most notorious members of JİTEM.

<sup>4</sup> Misspelling of *heval*: Kurdish for friend and *şewbaş*: Kurdish for good night.

## Appendix: Applications before İHD and Case Summaries

1 January 2020 – 30 October 2020

### Allegations of Threat, Informant-Making Offers, Abductions by the Law Enforcement and/or Public Officials

According to data presented in İHD's **2019** report, a total of 71 persons lodged such applications before İHD's central office and its branches: 8 persons before İHD's central offices, 36 before its İstanbul Branch, 8 before its Diyarbakır Branch, 8 before its İzmir Branch, 5 before its Ankara Branch, 1 before its Malatya Branch, and 5 before its Batman Branch. Further, İHD's Documentation Center identified 13 persons who were abducted and subjected to enforced informant-making offers and threats while they were released without any official action taken. The center also identified another 61 persons who were subjected to forced informant-making offers and threats (in custodial and extra-custodial places), while 5 persons were offered the same in prison by public prosecutors or other security officers. The total number was found to be **150** persons within this scope.

In **2020**, 6 persons lodged applications before İHD's central office on the same matter while 11 applied to its İstanbul Branch, 5 before its Diyarbakır Branch, 14 before its İzmir Branch, 5 before its Ankara Branch, 1 before its Mersin Branch, and 3 before its Van Branch making a total of 45 persons. İHD's Documentation Center identified 10 persons who were abducted and subjected to enforced informant-making offers and threats while they were released without any official action taken. The center also identified another 72 persons who were subjected to forced informant-making offers and threats (in custodial and extra-custodial places), while 3 persons were offered the same while in prison by public prosecutors or other security officers and 29 persons were threatened via social media. The total number was found to be **160** persons within this scope.

Human Rights Association's Co-Chairperson **Eren Keskin** reported that her residence in İstanbul was broken into. İHD issued a statement about the incident saying: "Human Rights Association's Co-Chairperson Ms Eren Keskin's residence in İstanbul, Turkey was broken into on 16 June 2020 under the guise of common burglary; her belongings in the residence were thrown about, yet it was seen that nothing was taken. The incident was reported to the local police station [...] It is our strong conviction that the incident is not an ordinary breaking and entering incident but one that directly targets Ms Keskin to threaten and intimidate her as was revealed by the initial findings at the crime scene."<sup>5</sup>

#### **Applications before İHD's central office in Ankara:**

On **21 January 2020**, M. Ç. stated in his application that his older brother had joined the YPG in 2014 but died in July 2015. After he received his brother's body, he began to receive threats on the phone including death threats by people who introduced themselves as police officers. He indicated that he was abducted by persons unknown to him on the road or some other place he was at. M. Ç. said that he had been a member of legal political parties since 2012 which made him think that the abduction and death threats were related to such memberships. M. Ç. indicated that abduction and death threats have been going on for the last 2-3 years which also included inflicting harm on his family. M. Ç. requested help adding that he was psychologically affected and was worried that his family might get hurt.

<sup>5</sup> İHD. "İHD Statement on Threats against Its Co-Chairperson Eren Keskin." 17 June 2020. <<https://ihd.org.tr/en/ihd-statement-on-threats-against-its-co-chairperson-eren-keskin>>

On **12 March 2020**, A. K., a member of Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), held a press conference at İHD's central office stating that he was abducted by persons who identified themselves as police and intelligence officers on 9 March 2020 and was forced to become an informant. A. K. indicated the following in his account: "Someone leapt out at me as I was on my way to meet a friend at about 14.00-15.00 and introduced himself as a police officer. He asked me to get into a vehicle with them. When I asked what was wrong, they said they just wanted to talk to me. They forced me into a car and took me to an isolated place in Etimesgut. They interrogated me in the car for approximately 2-3 hours and asked me to cooperate with them. [...] I categorically rejected their offer. Then they blackmailed me. They said: 'We can take you and say he came in from Rojava. You would be in jail for years.'" A. K. also said he would be filing criminal charges before the public prosecutor's office.

On **2 June 2020**, T. G. stated in his application that a young, skinny person who was 176-180 cm tall and wore a denim shirt and a black medical mask approached him as he was going down the stairs at Yüksel Street subway station in Ankara. According to T. G.'s account, this person asked him to stop and showed his police identification card asking T. G. his. After looking at his id, the person said "Wait for a bit in the corner, my superiors will come" along with gestures and facial expressions that showed that he found the person he was looking for. When T. G. inquired him about the reason why he was supposed to be waiting, he said they wanted to talk to him to which T. G. responded "I have nothing to say to them" and kept on walking away. T. G. said that he headed towards the subway entrance across the mosque but he was prevented from swiping his subway card as the same person hit his hand although he was able to pass the ticket gate. Yet the same person pursued T. G. while threatening him saying: "We just want to talk to you. I can get you under custody but I am not." According to T. G., he got on the approaching Sihhiye subway car and as the doors shut the person could not get in. T. G. got off the subway at the next stop and took a cab to see his friends when he received a call from 531 361 10 57 that asked "T., where are you?" According to T. G.'s account, he responded saying his whereabouts was not important but the person on the phone said: "It is your call. We just wanted to talk but you lost your chance. We will now talk through judicial ways. Anti-terrorism unit will come pick you up" and hung up the phone. T. G. stated that he filed criminal charges before Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor's Office on 2 June 2020 and requested İHD's assistance.

On **27 June 2020**, Ö. U. K., who was imprisoned in Bolu T-Type Prison, stated in his application that he was subjected to physical and verbal violence by the wardens and was threatened by them with death saying: "Your dead body will be released from here. We will kill you."

On **28 August 2020**, M. T. stated in his application that his residence in İstanbul that he shared with his brother G. T. was raided by about 10 law enforcement officers who introduced themselves as members of the anti-terrorism unit of the police on 25 August 2020 around 17.00 on the grounds that his brother had a finalized imprisonment sentence. M. T. said that the officers had a search warrant and left their place taking a statement down that indicated the wanted person could not be found there. According to M. T.'s statement, after the officers left, he realized that the raid was conducted because the officers had mistaken his brother for him. Following the raid panic ensued in the apartment building and neighborhood he lived in which led to his neighbors label his place as the "house of terrorists." M. T. said based on the information he received from his neighbors that the law enforcement officers had been gathering information about them by asking questions to his neighbors which he thought was against human rights because personal information had been shared with neighbors and others besides his own victimization as a family member in a situation that should have only involved the person in question. M. T. further stated that he believed that this situation would continue and requested İHD's assistance.

On **1 October 2020**, S. G. stated in his application the following: "I received a call on 17 September 2020 at 11.31 from the number 536 254 9361. The caller said that he was calling from Bitlis Public Prosecutor's Office and the prosecutor was going to talk to me at 16.00 because there were missing signatures in two files and I should go there. When I entered office no. 301 on the third floor allocated to public prosecutors' offices in Bitlis courthouse at 16.00, two civilians who introduced themselves as İbrahim and Mustafa greeted me.

Then they said that they had lied to me before, I did not have anything to do with the prosecutor's office, they were working as members of the (National Intelligence Agency) directly affiliated with the presidency. They suggested that I should be helping them and the country for the resolution of the Kurdish issue. They told me that there were files within the scope of which I was standing trial in Bitlis and Mardin. I had been suspended while I was working as a public official at Tatvan Municipality, and they would help me with both these issues. I left there after about a 40-minute talk. During the talk they said 'We are going to go on disturbing you on this matter.' They insistently said that this was not an informant-making effort but 'mastermind' efforts for the resolution of the issue. Such an attack against a person undertaken at a judicial building of the state that defines itself as a democratic, secular, social one based on rule of law cannot be accepted. It is clear that I no longer have safety of life and property after this meeting. I was dismissed from my post as a public official, for which I had been on suspension, on 23 September 2020 immediately after this meeting. I kindly request that you be informed about the state of affairs and provide necessary assistance."

### **Applications before İHD's Ankara Branch:**

On **8 February 2020** S. S. stated in his application that he was taken into police custody on 27 November 2019 in Ankara; was released on 29 November 2019 by the investigation judge and he had been receiving calls from unknown numbers since then. S. S. indicated that he answered a call from number 531 3615217, which he did not know, and as soon as he hung up the phone a person who called himself Murat and another person approached him at a café in Ankara where he was sitting. According to S. S., these persons showed him their police id cards and asked him about what he did with HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) while talking about his daughter all the time. S. S. said that the persons threatened him and suggested cooperation at the same time, and threatened him with his daughter as he was leaving. According to S. S., on 5 February 2020 at about 11:00, he got on bus no. 286 at Keçiören, Ovacık bus stop which he always used and knew that it never went out of Kızılay, Ankara. But the bus, according to S. S., stopped at the Beşevler subway stop on that day and someone pushed him from behind saying "get off;" he then asked the bus driver why he did not drive to Kızılay as he was supposed to but the driver did not respond back and after he was forced out of the bus two persons, who introduced themselves as police officers, got him between themselves at the stop. According to S. S., the police officers who told them to get off the bus also used the front door and the persons who said they were police forced him to have tea saying that they had things to talk about. Although S. S. told them that he had business to attend to, they forced him to a cafeteria but he did not want to go into the empty place. According to S. S., then they took him to the café next door where they asked him questions about HDP and, on top of it all, tried to threaten him by asking questions about his daughter. S. S. told the persons that he had nothing to do with them and to stay away from his family while they threatened him saying "It was us who got you released from custody. If we want, we can get you arrested again, then we will see you," adding "We know what you have been up to in HDP; we know everything about you." S. S. requested help stating that they threatened him by referring to his daughter all the time. Allegations of the applicant suggested that persons who identified themselves as police officers unlawfully invited citizens to cooperation by intimidating them, attempting to abduct them, forcing them to cooperation against their wishes, and by threatening them with their families and children while such practice qualified as a violation of the right to security and liberty of person.

On **5 March 2020**, M. A. Ö. stated in his application that on 4 March 2020 Wednesday at about 17:50 someone approached him and pushing down his neck forced him into a white Toyota Corolla with its windows covered in film license plate 06 EK ... (could not recall the rest) before an ATM around the overpass just before Meşrutiyet Street in Ankara. M. A. Ö. stated that there were two other persons in the car who first talked to him calmly but as he realized that he was being kidnapped he slowly took out his cell phone and called his friend but could not reach him. According to M. A. Ö., the persons in the car asked for his id card which he handed them and asked them who they were. The persons responded by saying that "You know who we are."

One of the persons said: "What are you doing here? Go to your parents' place, you would be wasted here." At that point, according to M. A. Ö., they realized that his phone was on and took it to hand it to the person sitting in the front. They hit him in the head with the phone 4-5 times after the person sitting next to him handed it over to the one in the front, then they stepped on to him and started hitting him in the face while the car was on the move heading outside Mamak, Ankara. According to M. A. Ö., the person in the front received a call who then said "Let's not bring trouble on to ourselves, let's return" but the person next to him went on slapping and punching him while he tried to protect his head and face. When the car arrived at the Mamak-Kayaş train station, the person in the front told him, "If I ever see you again around here, I will act differently" and he responded "I live in Ankara, I have no business elsewhere." According to M. A. Ö.'s account, he was left on the Kayaş road where he called his friends to pick him up and take him to a hospital. He received a medical report indicating battery at the hospital that said "traces of battery on the head, nose and lips; pain in his back due to battery, a broken tooth, contusion and traces of slapping on the left chin." M. A. Ö. requested help. Allegations of the applicant suggested that persons who identified themselves as police officers attempted to kidnap citizens by intimidating them, threatened and battered people and such practice qualified as a violation of the right to security and liberty of person.

On **22 June 2020**, M. K. stated in his application that three people who introduced themselves as police officers approached him as he was collecting waste paper from Tunalı Hilmi Street in Ankara on 1 June 2020 at about 10:30 and asked to talk to him. According to M. K., he accepted the offer because he was afraid and restless, and they sat at a café on Tunalı Hilmi Street where they offered him money and help in exchange for information and cooperation. M. K. indicated that he decidedly refused these offers upon which they said they would bring the body of his older brother who had died in Kobane to Turkey so that he could have a grave in here but M. K. refused again. According to M. K., they this time threatened him by saying "If you are not taking this proposal, we will not be responsible for the problems you will face." Further, the persons showed him a photo of someone his family knew who was helping them to get the cancer medication M. K.'s father needed because they did not have the financial resources. M. K. believed that the fact that these persons had and shown him the photo of their acquaintance made him uneasy in terms of protection of personal data which also indicated that he and his relatives were being followed and under surveillance, which was a criminal offense. M. K. stated that he would be able to identify the persons that approached him. According to M. K., these persons followed him and took his photos on June 2, 3, and 4 across a gas station on Bestekâr Street. Following these, he learnt that he was facing criminal charges on the grounds of his past social media posts that he thought they delivered on their promise and the lawsuit was brought because he refused to cooperate. According to M. K., his father was repeatedly called in to the anti-terrorism department of the police where he faced psychological pressure with officers asking: "Where is your son? Get your son to us." M. K. stated that his father was a cancer patient and neither he nor his family was in a position to handle such pressure asking for an end to all these pressures and threats. M. K. requested help by saying that he thought they did not have safety of life and were under pressure as a whole family. Allegations of the applicant suggested that persons who identified themselves as police officers unlawfully invited citizens to cooperation by intimidating and following them, by forcing them to cooperation against their wishes, and by threatening them with their families and children while such practice qualified as a violation of the right to security and liberty of person.

On **24 August 2020**, E. S. stated in his application that he was threatened by two 45-50 year old persons who indicated that they were with the police department and waiting before his house in Çankaya, Ankara on August 10 or 11, or 12 (he was not sure about the exact date) at about 7.20 a.m. According to E. S., the persons told him "We want to talk to you about your work at the party" to which he responded by saying he did not do any work or have any custody warrants against him, he just had friends at the party. The persons threatened E. S. saying: "We know about your family situation. We want to help you. Does your father know about the party? We would have gone to your house if we wanted to" to which he said that he would file a complaint against them because they did not have the right to follow him. The persons sarcastically said they were with the police department and kept on pressuring him for 15 minutes, then he got on a minibus to

Kızılay from Çetin Emeç Boulevard, Ankara. As he got on the minibüs, a young person about 20 years old followed him till the Bilkent subway. When he got off at the Bilkent subway station and as he was passing a business center the same persons in the same vehicle stopped him and said that they would call him and he had to wait for it. According to E. S., he said that this was the second time, he was uneasy going home and to work, he was disturbed and would lodge a complaint against them. Upon this the persons rapidly moved away. E. S. also indicated that about 5-6 months before this incident he was approached by three persons -a slim woman with red and blue hair of about 165 cm tall and two men in black clothes with hoodies on their heads- as he was walking towards Güvenpark in Kızılay, Ankara. According to E. S., one of the men talked to him calling him by his name to which he responded by asking them if he knew them thinking they might have been from his social circle. The man said "No, but we know you." He then asked "how" and told them he would never speak if they did not respond. According to E. S., they said that they were with the National Intelligence Agency and when he heard that he stepped back but they said they just wanted to have tea with him. As he told them he did not want to do so, police officers making their rounds passed them by and the person who was talking to him got closer to him turning his back on the police and said: "We do not trust the state. If you help us, we will extend moral and material support to you too. We will help you with your job as well." When they insisted on having tea, he told them that he did not have anything to say to them, they did not have the right to interfere with his social circle, he would lodge a complaint against them if they kept on threatening, following, and harassing him. According to E. S., when he tried to step away, the man forced him to stop and made him write down his phone number. The following day E. S. received a text from the number he was made to write down which said: "E. you did not call me." E. S. then blocked the number 537 473 1410 and stated that the man who talked to him called himself Hasan. E. S. requested help. Allegations of the applicant suggested that persons who identified themselves as intelligence officers unlawfully invited citizens to cooperation by intimidating and following them, by forcing them to cooperation against their wishes, and by threatening them with their families and children while such practice qualified as a violation of the right to security and liberty of person.

On **9 October 2020**, M. K. stated in his application that she was stopped by the police on 10 March 2020 at about 16:00 before her residence and was forced into a vehicle without stating any reasons. According to M. K., a woman police officer (whose name was Yasemin as she heard of the conversations in the car) dealt with her and started interrogating her about the 8 March protest (International Women's Day) she participated. M. K. indicated that the officers tried to find a middle way to make her cooperate by both threats and propositions. According to M. K., the officers covertly threatened her through insinuations about her family and school for about half an hour and also told her that they had been following her for the last seven months, and then released her. M. K. stated that about five months after this incident (does not remember the exact date) she noticed that she was being followed by two police officers before her home between 14:00 and 15:00. The police officers then approached M. K. on the pretense of having tea and was again forced to cooperation while the conversation was similar to the one before where she was covertly threatened by police officers. According to M. K., the officers insinuated in their own way that she would face trouble in the future, her family would be upset during this process and covertly threatened her by informing her family. (The woman police officer who approached her was the same one from before who was called Yasemin.) M. K. stated that the officers left after seeing her reaction and asked for help.

#### **Applications before İHD's Diyarbakır Branch:**

On **16 January 2020**, S. D. stated the following in his application: "I was taken into custody from my house by the gendarmerie on 20 December 2019 at about 6 a.m. I was taken to a hospital. Then I was taken to Derik district gendarmerie command. Then I was taken to Mardin provincial gendarmerie command. They put forth some charges firstly. I rejected them. Then I was taken to a holding cell. I was taken to an interview room in the evening of the first day. They both insulted me and charged me in the room again. It took about an hour. When I rejected the charges they resorted to violence. They did this with a baseball bat. They hit me in both

palms. They repeated this for 6-7 times. Then they sent me to the holding cell again. The next day in the afternoon I was taken to a hospital for a medical battery report. The doctor who came to the custody vehicle asked me if I was ok and I said yes because the soldiers were there with us. On the third day when I was taken to the hospital, I said I was battered and the doctors drafted a medical battery report. This time I was taken to an examination room. On the fourth day, we were again taken to a hospital and the medical battery report was renewed. Then we were transferred to a court. I was exposed to insults, swear words and violence under custody especially the first day. We were released under judicial control but I think that I am under physical surveillance. They follow me from a distance. They follow where we come and go. They are persons in civilian vehicles who I think are the police. I cannot exactly see their faces because the windows of their cars are covered in film. Moreover, I lodged an application before the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey for physical and psychological treatment after the custody. I want İHD to follow-up the incident as well.”

On **4 February 2020**, F. Y. stated the following in his application: “I served as a provincial council member and provincial municipal council member for HDP for two terms in Diyarbakır. I was actively involved in politics in Diyarbakır for HDP and previous parties. I was dismissed from my position as Yenişehir municipal council member following the appointment of a state trustee in 2016. I was also imprisoned for a while. I was acquitted within the scope of that file as well. I now work in construction and farming. To the best of my memory, I was driving in my own car on 20 January 2020 at about 15:00 from Gaziler Street to Huzurevi neighborhood. As I was driving on the right, a Ford Tourneo approached my vehicle from the left and signaled. There were two persons in plainclothes of about 45 years of age and 170-180 cm tall in the car. Upon their signal, I stopped my car while they parked before me. Two persons getting off the car showed their police id cards and wanted to talk to me. I told them that I did not want to speak with them and said they should tell me if there was any legal action against me. He told me there was no such action; he just wanted to chat with me on a certain matter. I also told them that my residence and other addresses were open so that they could easily notify me in case there was any legal action against me. I told them that stopping me in a pirate-like manner was a criminal offense. I refused when they told me that they wanted to sit down and talk. I showed them a café across the street and told them that we could talk there and I would not go anywhere else. They responded by indicating that that café might be crowded and not appropriate, and suggested going somewhere else. I refused. When I told them that they could ask their question in their car, we got on there. In the car, one of the persons showed me a photograph from WhatsApp in his own phone and asked me whether I knew that person. When I told them that I did not, they said our information indicated that you knew this person. Then I repeated my answer and said: ‘Do whatever you would like to do. My answer is the same whether you take me into custody or detain me.’ This time the other person said: ‘Let’s not take this meeting into account, let’s have tea some other time.’ I told him that I would not meet him and got off the car. 3 or 4 days after that encounter, I noticed that the same car and the persons were following me. I do not know who these persons, who introduced themselves as police officers, are or what they do. I am disturbed by the fact that they follow me all the time. I complain that I was subjected to an unlawful interrogation and was forcibly held; threatened through photographs of persons I did not know and this informant-making attempt. I request legal assistance from your association and ask that İHD follow this matter.”

On **25 February 2020**, P. S. stated the following in his application: “I have been working as xxx at xxx for about a year. On 20 February 2020 A. Ç., our principal, called me after work and said: ‘If you are in Diyarbakır, go see the provincial vice-director H. Ö.; I do not know what the issue is.’ I said that I would and went to the vice-director’s office the same day. My principal had informed me about the place and office of the vice-director before. When I entered his office, I saw that there was someone else with him. He sent away that person a couple of minutes after I entered. Then H. Ö. went out only to come back shortly. He said: ‘Police friends want to talk to you about a matter.’ Three persons who indicated that they were police officers came in at once. They did not show me any id cards. Before the police started talking, H. Ö. gave his keys to his office to them adding ‘You can talk at ease’ and went out. One of the police officers was about 35-40 years of age, a big man of about 180 cm tall. He had fair skin. The other two officers were younger than 30 years of age and shorter. One of them was a brunette, while the other was blond and had blue eyes. I remember

them calling this young, relatively short officer as 'Yiğit.' I got very scared after the vice-principal handed the keys over to the police. One of the officers put the key in the lock. When the other one said 'There is no need to lock the door. No one will bother us,' he changed his mind and did not lock the door. They first talked to me in classic greeting statements like 'Hello, welcome.' Then they got straight to the point. They asked: 'Is there anyone in your family in junction with terrorists?' I said 'My uncle was in jail about the matter.' They asked where he was now. They tried to gather information generally about my uncle. They asked related questions. They said: "You, too, are a civil servant like us; we have to help each other out." They added: 'If you do not know his whereabouts, you can learn through relatives.' They wanted to gather information about my uncle because he was abroad. They said: 'Maybe he regrets and wants to return but cannot do it. You help us; we take him back.' They also asked if I was a candidate xxx and whether our contracts were renewed. I perceived this as a threat. They indicated that they could help me out saying: 'Isn't it hard to come back and forth to xxx? How about we transfer you to Diyarbakır?' I told them that I have been staying away from such matters by this time and I did not want to get involved from now on. They asked me for my phone number and wanted me to call them if I learnt anything. Then I said: 'Give me your number; I do not think that I will learn anything but if I do, I will call you.' But they did not give their phone number to me. They took mine. It was about 16:20 when I arrived at the provincial directorate. It was past 17:00 when I left. I could not see anyone on the floor where the office was when I left. There was almost no one left in the building. My principal later told me that he did not receive a call from the provincial vice-director called H. Ö. but from xxx district director. I fear for my safety of life, I feel threatened. I request legal assistance from your association."

On **9 March 2020**, P. S. stated the following in his application: "I had lodged an application before your association before on 25 February 2020. We had held a press conference and filed charges about the matter. After these steps, I twice noticed that the same person was following me. I wanted to lodge another application since this situation disturbed me. I was at a crossroad to go to xxx on 6 March 2020 at about 06:45 a.m. While I was waiting for the bus, a Nissan Navara passed by me. As I recall its license plate was 34 CVS 938. The driver looked at me for a while as they were passing by me. Then he parked the vehicle about 20 meters away. This person immediately pulled out after I got on the bus. As the bus was en route it stopped now and then to pick up a passenger, this vehicle followed suit. I caught his eye now and then in the bus. I thought there might have been a misunderstanding. But today while I was waiting for the bus at xxx crossroads, I saw the same vehicle and the driver again. He looked at me again and parked his car a few meters away. When I took out my phone to record the vehicle, he noticed and left the place in no time. I did not see that vehicle again on my way. I do not know whether this person was a police officer or what he did for a living. But this situation extremely bothers me. Therefore I request that your association help me in this matter. I would also like you to submit a letter about the matter before the prosecutor's office." (It was later learnt that P. S.'s contract was suspended on 27 March 2020.)

On **10 March 2020**, A. Y. stated the following in his application: "I am a district executive board member at HDP. A friend of mine and I went to Dağkapı by a minibus at about 15:00 yesterday (9 March 2020). A white Ford Tourneo with a license plate starting with 21 BT the end of which I cannot remember began following me. Then a white Toyota Corolla with license plate 21 AAB 744 started following me. We went to a café in Dağkapı and stayed there until 19:30. I left the café and got on a minibus. The above-mentioned Toyota kept on following me. I got off the minibus at the former farmers market and saw that this vehicle was still following me. I was able to cover my tracks having walked for a while. I am very much concerned about this situation. I am lodging an application to have it recorded in your association's files."

#### **Applications before IHD's İstanbul Branch:**

On **13 January 2020**, O. G. stated the following in his application: "I was detained in 2011. I was released in May 2012. I constantly received threats from plainclothes police officers following my release. Such threats, texts went on occasionally. They verbally threatened me a month ago in Yenibosna. Two persons in

plainclothes told me that they were police officers and threatened me. They said: 'If you work at HDP, bad things might happen to you in the future.' I told them that I would file a complaint against them before the prosecutor's office but their attitude did not change. I had received threatening texts from phone number 534 417 74 10. They had told me in their previous talks that if I helped them out, they would help me but when I refused, they only threatened me. These incidents disturbed my mental state. I sometimes feel like I am being followed even if it is not the case. I want to press charges. I also request psychological support."

On **22 January 2020**, A. A. stated the following in his application: "After meeting with a friend in Sarıyer, they stopped me and asked me what my business was there, with whom I met and told me to be smart or else they would not be responsible for what would happen next. They left saying 'We will come again, watch yourself.' I then learnt that they went to my place of work in July by accident because they had an argument with my colleague. Lastly, they stopped me around my house on 20 December and said: 'Help us out, listen to us and do not tire us. We have your pictures. If we want, we can make you stay in jail for 20 years.' I wanted to leave saying: 'Do what you can. I am a *Kaldıraç* magazine reader; I participate in their protests, distribute the magazine and do not know anything else other than these.' Holding my arm, they said: 'We are not done talking yet. We know where you live. You have kids, do not trouble us, listen to what we say.' I reiterated what I had said and added that was all I had to tell them. They responded 'You can go now but we will come again.' These persons who approached me introduced themselves as police officers. They showed me their id cards but I could not see. They were three persons the first time, and four the last. I want to hold a press conference and a document that shows I lodged an application."

On **29 February 2020**, A. T. stated the following in his application: "As I was leaving a friend in Mecidiyeköy, İstanbul and walking toward the metrobus two plainclothes police officers stopped me. They took my id and put me in a white Fiat Egea accompanied by four police officers claiming that I had to give a statement. They asked me to switch off my phone and took it. Then I was taken to a cemetery in Topkapı. There, two persons waiting outside and one getting out of a grey Volkswagen Transporter took me in. They kept my id, phone and bag (they later returned them). We talked inside the vehicle; the man inside told me the names of my family members and my ex-girlfriend and mentioned that my father was suspended adding that he would come again. In the meantime he asked me what kind of activities I was conducting among students. A white Renault Clio hatchback approached. One of the two persons inside the car got off and got on the transporter. The man who got on said his name was Ahmet and he was Laz. He was addressing the other person as 'chief.' They asked me to spy for them among the students and told me that they could help me with money, internship and every issue at school in return if I wanted. They warned me not to go to İHD as well. They said someone they knew had gone to İHD which was wrong. They threatened me with detention if I did not do what they asked. They said that they would call again in a week to meet and learn what my decision was. I indicated that I would in no way give them what they wanted. They told me that I should never be afraid if I helped them out. The man inside the transporter (the bald man in the grey transporter) stayed, the one who came later left. They returned my things, left me at the subway station at Topkapı and said goodbye. They claimed that they were from the intelligence service. They had a file on me with my photograph and did not let me read it when I tried to. There were two logos on the upper right and left corners of the paper in the file. They asked me why I went to HDP's congress and how the process ran. (I was working at HDP's fourth congress.) I told them I would stop participating in protests at the university. They said: 'No, stay. Save your friends and inform us.' I lodged an application because I have no security. When something happens to me, I want those who abducted me to be identified as responsible. I request that these taken down in records."

On **16 March 2020**, S. Ç. stated the following in his application: "I was an executive at HDP's provincial office. I am still politically active in my neighborhood. I was taken into custody and detained on 13 October 2019 because of the seventh anniversary of my party. I was taken prisoner for five months. I was released on 21 February 2020. They called me from 552 489 46 13 on both phones under my name that my son and daughter were using on 9 March 2020. They asked me to go to the security department. On 10 March 2020, I was interrogated by four persons in plainclothes whom I think are from the intelligence service. They threatened

me. They coerced me to become an informant for them. They claimed that I was involved in illegal activities and they would not let me be. They said they would follow me non-stop and disturb me. Because I was imprisoned, I had established an emotional bond with people there for five months. I went to the prison two weeks on end to send the things my friends needed (clothing, undergarments). I did not go in but I sent the things through visitors. They told me that I should not go to the prison and warned me. They said that I had kids and I should help them if I did not want to be worried about them. I told them that what they were saying was wrong and left the place refusing their offer. I said this was an unlawful interrogation and if they went on in this way, I would call my lawyer and I ended the interview. I only request to hold a press conference at this stage. I will reapply to your association to press charges if they continue with the pressure.”

On **24 August 2020**, Ö. Y. stated the following in his application: “Police officers in a civilian vehicle in Fatih neighborhood asked to see my id on 22 August 2020 at about 18:00. They forced me into a car as soon as I gave them my id. It was a white Citroen. They covered my eyes in the car with a virus mask. They held my head down telling me not to hold up. They were three persons. We drove for about 1.5-2 hours. They did not hit me in the car, they talked to me. We mostly talked about religion. They asked me whether I was in school, where I worked; I said I was working at a marketplace. They asked me what I did during the weekdays, which books I read. About two hours later they got me off this car and put me in a grey transporter. There were another three people there, they were now six people. They battered me in that transporter. I was a former HDP employee; I had worked at HDP in 2019. They told me to go back to HDP and collect information for them. When I refused, they battered me. They said: ‘Work with us, we are your elder brothers. We are the state, we are the National Intelligence Agency, we are the intelligence; we would help you in every way.’ They were calling one another ‘commander.’ They hit me everywhere. They told me that they would beat me up till the morning. I accepted their offer to save myself. Then they said that they would call me on Tuesday and have lunch/dinner on Saturday in Kadıköy as brothers. They did not return my id. They left me at the Kavacık crossroads. As soon as they left me, I went to Sultanbeyli Emergency Hospital at 23:40 and got a medical report indicating battery. The same night I went to Sultanbeyli Fatih Police Department with my medical report and pressed charges. I went to the police with my mother. I did not obtain a copy of my statement. I request medical and legal assistance.”

On **25 August 2020**, C. Ç. stated the following in his application: “I was walking toward a minibus stop after leaving the xxx HDP provincial office at about 17:20 on 24 August 2020. As I was just getting on the minibus, plainclothes police officers stopped me and asked to see my id which I handed. Then they took me to a car saying they would take action on the grounds that I was not wearing a mask. They were four people; they held my hands at the back, forced my head down and we drove for two hours. During that time they used slang, insulted me, and battered me. Then they made me wait at a place. After about 30 minutes they blindfolded me and forced me into another car kicking me. We drove for an hour and a half. They took off my blindfold in a forest. They said that they would save me, told me to work with them, and that they would extend moral and material support to me. They insulted and threatened me because I refused. They said: ‘We will take you again within a week; think until that time’; I refused again. Then they left me on the Habibler road. While I was getting my id and phone back, they forcibly gave me 300 TRY saying that it was cab money. I request medical and legal assistance and want to hold a press conference.”

On **27 August 2020**, M. T. stated the following in his application: “A civilian Passat stopped me on 7 February 2020 in İstanbul after work. There were two persons in the car. Then they took me to a secluded place. First, they asked me to become an informant for them, then they gave me a week to think. They said ‘You will have to bear what happens if you don’t call us within a week.’ But I did not call them. A week later, on 14 February 2020, they launched a dawn operation. When they first took me with a civilian car, they took me to a hill in my neighborhood. There was another person awaiting there. There they asked me about an incident that happened a while ago in my neighborhood; I said I did not know. They told me that they would give me some names and told me to collect information about them. When I refused, they battered me. They said they would call again the following week. They left me on the spot where they picked me. The following week I

always used different paths to home to avoid them. The police raided our home where I lived with my family at midnight around 00:50 on 14 February 2020 and they told us that the prosecutor's office had a search warrant for me. They took me to the police department in Üsküdar. I was held in custody for four days. They claimed that I had shared a photo of Öcalan on Instagram, I refuted the charge. When I was at the precinct, the police officers who had abducted me before interrogated me. I saw the prosecutor after four days and I was released by the prosecutor's office. The phone number of one of those who abducted me is 536 765 1453. I was continuously followed after the abduction. I was laid off from my subsequent jobs and I am unemployed now. I want to hold a press conference and request legal and medical assistance.

On **28 August 2020**, L. P. stated the following in his application: "Four persons who claimed that they were police officers forcibly held me saying that I had to give a statement on 27 August 2020 noon at about 12:00. They battered and insulted me in the car. They changed cars after an hour. I guess they took me to an armored vehicle. I say 'I guess' because my arms were tied with a plastic handcuff while my face was covered with black tape. Those in the armored vehicle told me that they were intelligence (National Intelligence Agency) officers. They stripped me naked and electrocuted me. They asked me various questions about numerous subjects that I had no idea about. I was held prisoner in their hands for a total of five hours. As they were letting me go, they said 'the state gave us authority; go and lodge a complaint wherever you want.' They confiscated all my personal belongings including my phone, I was blindfolded. Then they let me go on a highway around Başakşehir while I was blindfolded. I request medical and legal assistance and I will inform you about a press conference later."

On **1 October 2020**, M. Ö. stated the following in his application: "Four persons who said they were police officers forced me into a car in a marketplace as I was going to my father's workplace on 29 September 2020 at about 15:00. They said they had a statement against me, and they wanted mine too. They held my head down in the meantime. The person sitting next to me told the driver to go to Vatan police department. After an hour and a half drive, I was blindfolded and taken to another vehicle. There were three people in this vehicle including the driver. The two persons who talked to me told me that I was going to stand trial because I went to HDP's picnic. They said: 'If you help us out, we will get your name out of the file.' They asked about persons who were members of HDP's youth assembly and said they would do bad things to them. They asked me about my family, what my siblings and father did for a living, where their workplaces were, and the school I attended. Then they made me swear that I would not tell anybody that I met with them. They told me to go to Aksaray Square or Vatan Police Department the next time they called me. They asked me if I abused drugs and when I said I did not, they said 'You don't really look like it.' They cornered me saying 'Do you have any money? If not, let us give you some; tell us the truth' as they were letting me go at a tram station. Then I got off the car. It was a grey Mercedes Vito. I want you to draft a complaint letter."

On **7 October 2020**, M. Ç. stated the following in his application: "My son, B. Ç., left home on 15 December 2015 and never returned. I have not heard from him for the last two years. There were curfews, deaths at the time he left. Based on this I went to Mardin, Nusaybin hoping to learn something about him and lodged an application before the public prosecutor's office. I gave them my DNA sample. Following these, the police came to my house in İstanbul. They asked where B. was, where he was hiding, and we should turn him in if he were hiding with a relative of ours. When I came home, my other son B. and my spouse told me about the incident. My spouse and I immediately went to the police department and asked why they came to our house. They said that there was no such thing and sent us away. Then they called me on the phone along with my spouse and other son, and asked us to testify about B. When we did not go, they came to my and my spouse's workplace and took our statement. About six months after these incidents we learnt that our son had died. We heard that my son B. Ç. was killed in Rojava in 2019. Someone called me lastly on 23 October [sic.] 2020 and I picked up. They told me that they were calling from the department again. When I asked what the problem was, they asked me to go to Yakacık Police Department about my son B. Ç. I went. They told me to call them when I arrived to pick me up at the entrance. So I did. They took me to the upper floor. They were two persons in plainclothes. We started talking. They asked me when and where B. went. I said that he went

in 2015 but did not know where and lodged an application before the prosecutor's office. I said: 'You, too, know that I lost my son in 2019.' They said: 'Yes, we know; you held a condolence service.' Then I asked them what their problem was. They said let us help each other not to live through something like this again. I asked what kind of a help they were referring to. They said things along the lines of 'Let us protect our young ones to prevent them, brothers from dying like B. Look, you have two other sons around here; wouldn't you be upset if they followed their brother's path tomorrow?' I told them I would, of course, be sad but the one who would go away would not tell me beforehand. They asked me to help them saying let us help each other. I said: 'There is nothing to be helped. My kids and I mind our own business; you can get no change out of me. I now see why you summoned me here; it is not about B. You want to make a spy, co-conspirator out of me.' They refused and told me that the only thing they wanted was mutual help. I told them that I did not want anything from them and I had nothing to help them. They said they would call again and we would talk. I objected and left the precinct. They called again at 14:43 and wanted to meet again; I said no. They said 'You haven't cooled down yet; cool down and come to talk to us.' I told them that I would go there the next Thursday, but not on my own and hung up the phone."

On **8 October 2020**, M. T. stated the following in his application: "They took me under the pretense of background search on 7 October 2020 at about 16:40 in xxx street. I saw two cars without license plates and six persons. They told me that there was a burglary and took me in. First, they said we were going to the hospital's police where they said the burglary took place, then they changed their minds and said we were going to Vatan Police Department. But I saw that we were going somewhere else. After driving for an hour they took me to Anıtlar cemetery. There the police officers changed places. There were three vehicles and maybe a total of nine persons. They asked me to become an informant for them. They told me to inform them about HDP, its meeting minutes and activities. In short, they told me to inform them about party activities. They showed me images of previous press conferences and activities of the party and threatened me to open up a file if I did not cooperate with them. I then told them all those were legal and I had no reservations whatsoever. Such talk went on for about 1.5-2 hours at the cemetery. Then they left me at the cemetery. As they were leaving, they told me that they would call me often. The next day (today) they called from a special number and asked to meet me. I hung up saying that I was busy. I want to hold a press conference and press charges."

#### **Applications before İHD's İzmir Branch:**

On **6 January 2020**, M. Y. S. stated in his application that he was stopped by two persons who showed him their police identification cards, taken to a café where he was kept for about four hours during which he was asked questions about illegal organizations and given his friends' names, and the officers asked to see him again.

On **6 January 2020**, A. M. Y. stated in his application that his family was called by the police two weeks before who said he was involved in protests and made his family come over from their hometown; he was stopped by persons who identified themselves as police officers on 2 January 2020 in Konak, İzmir and wanted to talk to him.

On **9 January 2020**, A. R. D. stated in his application that he was the chairperson of a newly established İzmir students' association and he received a call from an unknown number on the same day asking him to go to the Buca Police Department to talk about the association and was threatened with statements like "It would be a pity for your father, for your newly appointed brother/sister" if he failed to do so.

On **13 January 2020**, İ. A. stated in his application that he was taken into police custody on 7 January 2020 during which the police officers attempted to influence his neighbors by saying "We are taking a terrorist from this flat" and two officers asked him to name persons', parties', associations' names adding that he would no longer have economic problems if he did so.

On **21 January 2020**, M. T. stated in his application that he was an 11<sup>th</sup> grader at a high school in İzmir and the vice-principal summoned him on 13 January 2020 during the 8<sup>th</sup> period to his office. In the office M. T. saw three police officers waiting for him who indicated that they wanted to talk to him in private. According to M. T., after the vice-principal left his office, the officers asked him about his relatives, their positions in the organization and gave him their phone numbers. M. T. stated that the officers were troubled when the vice-principal went into his office accompanied by the school counselor but kept on talking to him along the same lines.

On **30 January 2020**, M. E. stated in his application that he received a call on 21 January 2020 from persons stating that they were police officers who asked him if he were in the shop so that they could meet him. According to M. E., he hung up the phone telling the persons he did not want to meet them but they kept on calling until 30 January to which he did not respond. The person(s) called M. E. on 30 January again telling him that they were in the neighborhood and asked to meet him. M. E. hung up the phone again but they sent him a text on WhatsApp saying: "Call me." Upon this text, M. E. indicated that he called them to say that he would be filing a complaint before the public prosecutor's office while in the meantime he realized that the persons whom he thought were police officers were present around his shop.

On **10 February 2020**, F. D. stated in his application that two persons forced him into a vehicle on 3 February 2020 as he got separated from his older brother for a second while walking in a market. According to F. D., these persons told him in the vehicle that they knew about his political party activities and asked him to continue with the work to inform them about these activities from time to time while at the same time trying to hand him 50 TRY. The persons told F. D. that they would inform his family if he were in touch with persons working at HDP. They also drove F. D. around for about an hour in downtown Manisa. According to F. D., they showed him his images taken at a concert organized by HDP's Youth Assembly alleging that he shouted illegal slogans there. Another police officer was talking to his older brother in the meantime, F. D. added. F. D. also stated that he was called the next day and was invited to lunch/dinner.

On **20 February 2020**, U. Y. stated in his application that he received a call on 5 February 2020 from persons telling him that they were calling from the Turkish Employment Agency. According to U. Y. these persons kept on calling him and later he recognized that they were in fact police officers. As he was getting off the bus two persons stopped him and took him to a teahouse after showing him their police identity cards. According to U. Y., these persons told him his friends' names, asked about them, and offered job and money. When U. Y. refused the offers, they left the place but he continued to receive texts the same day along the lines of "call us at your convenience."

On **21 February 2020**, V. A. stated in a press conference held at İHD that he was a *Kaldıraç* magazine reader and was forced to become an informant by persons who introduced themselves as police officers in İzmir. V. A. said: "Someone held my arm out of nowhere as I was walking in the street. He showed me an id card and said he was a police officer. Then he tried to pull me to a secluded street saying that he wanted to chat with me. Two more police officers in plainclothes joined as well. I reacted and pulled my arm; told him that we could talk about whatever he wanted where we were. They said along the lines of 'We are good people. We will not hurt you' etc. and told me that they had been following me for a long time and knew what I was doing and where I lived after listing the recent legal protests I attended and clothes I wore at those protests. [...] They asked me questions about the magazine and my friends. He commented on the financial statuses of my friends, their family lives and health conditions and said they 'wished the best for us.' When I answered their questions saying 'It seems that you know more than I do based on what you have told me,' they told me that I could call them if I had any problems; they would help me with rent and scholarship grants, with finding a job at a ministry after I graduated or facilitate any other job interview." V. A.'s lawyers would file criminal charges about the incident.

On **28 February 2020**, Ç. O. stated in his application that he had received a call two years before telling him that he needed to go to Aliğa Police Department in İzmir. According to Ç. O., when he went to the

department some persons told him in the yard: "You are a good person, we know you. Talk to us, help us." When he refused, they threatened him saying: "Watch your step! Would you rather have your door knocked in the crack of dawn?" Ç. O. indicated that the police raided his own house and his mother's 20 days later and that the officers told him that his lawyer asked to meet him while he was under custody. According to O. Ç., when he went to confer with his lawyer, he saw that the police officer that talked to him in the yard was there to talk to him and he refused. Two years later, two persons (the man being the one two years before) stopped him on 27 February 2020 and showed him a file with his family's photographs insisting to sit down and talk but left the place upon his friend's arrival.

On **19 June 2020**, A. K. stated in his application the following: "A person who introduced himself as a police officer named Mehmet Pehlivan called my father twice on 4 May 2020 at 16:16 and 16:22. His number is 537 451 8620. He had told my father 'Your son communicates with terrorist organizations. We track him over his phone. These organizations he is in communication with are not yet big ones but he has relations with terrorist organizations. Now if we want, we can take him into custody but would release him because of today's conjuncture. This is why we do not take him into custody. We saw your son posting bills. If he keeps on with this stuff his end will not be good. I want what is best for him.' The same person called my father again on 5 May at 20.30 and asked to talk to me. (Back then I did not have a phone.) I talked to that person on my father's phone. He told me that he did what he did because he wanted what was best for me and wanted to make me leave the organization not because for his own good but because he wanted to ease his conscience. I said to him: 'What you are doing is technical surveillance and it is illegal.' He responded by saying that he did this to inform the family and did not conduct technical surveillance. When I asked him how he knew about my WhatsApp conversations, he said 'Can't I have other connections?' Upon this I told him that this was unconstitutional and would be filing a criminal complaint. He said 'You can file a criminal complaint through your lawyer at most or you can hold a press conference at the Human Rights Association. What can your lawyers do to me?' Then I hung up on him. I am now a student preparing for the university admission exam. I have no links to any organizations whatsoever. These calls disturb my family and I. I request that you undertake necessary communication with the authorities."

On **7 August 2020**, İ. T. stated in his application the following: "I participated in a protest march that would start before the Student Selection and Placement Center on 5 August 2020 to protest the repeal of the Istanbul Convention. I was there at 18:30. The police did not let the march to proceed. We insisted to walk on and some commotion happened between us and the police. I was caught in between and security department officers tried to take me into custody. They battered me when they tried to take me into custody. They first dragged me to one side with their shields. Women police officers tried to hold my hand from the back while male police officers pulled me from my clothes from the front. My t-shirt's buttons came off because of this. Ecchymoses were formed on my left arm. I was not taken into custody in the meantime. I learnt that ten persons were taken into police custody at the first stage during the commotion. As I was leaving the place, I noticed that the police were following me. When they said behind my back along the lines of 'See, she is leaving,' I decided to stay. When some time had passed, I learnt that another six persons were also taken into custody. I joined the sit-in to release those taken into custody. When the sit-in ended, I walked toward İzban to leave the place. It was about 9 p.m. We would take a cab around İzban to go to a trade unionist's house. As I was getting on the cab, a police officer forcibly pulled me out of the cab. They choked me and four or five different officers pulled me to sides, they hit me with their knees. They forcibly laid me on the ground facing down, they wanted to handcuff me from the back, they rubbed my face on the ground. I felt that someone was pushing me with their knees on my back. They wanted to drag me away to the street because people were reacting. During all this time I told them that I was sick. They said things like 'Who is going to save you from the car?' They insulted me about my sexual orientation. They uttered heavy swear words at my mother and me. When I was taken before the second tobacco store, I had a crisis as I could not handle what was going on. They had carried me over to the sidewalk. They lifted my face and poured water for almost a minute. People around wanted them to call an ambulance. Someone called an ambulance but I was hustled off to the police car without even seeing the ambulance. I do not recall my condition in the police

vehicle. They took me to Tepecik Hospital. When I came to, I saw two police officers present and I was on IV drip. I asked for a phone to inform my family but no one gave me one. They let me call my family from the general line after I asked for it for twenty times. I was held under observation for 6 hours there. The police went an hour after I came to. I left the hospital after 6 hours. I was called in to give a statement on 6 August 2020 on allegations of resisting the police. I gave my statement. Further, they called my older brother yesterday. A person who introduced himself as a police officer said to my brother: 'They put ideas into your brother's head. He became a member of an organization. He will be a member of MLKP and will go to the mountain.' I am now going through a very rough patch with my family because of this. Although I have no relationship with any organization, I now face being kicked out of the house as my family was called to hear such things. All that has happened had a very bad effect on my psychology. I want to file a complaint against those who battered and threatened me, and called my older brother."

On **7 August 2020**, B. O. stated in her application the following: "The police went to my mother's house on 19 July 2020. They said to my mother: 'Do something about your daughter. She participates in protests. They will take your daughter to the mountain. What does she do? Do you pay her rent? Your daughter is not what she seems like, she lies to you.' After this my mother called me and told me all these. I was going to attend the press conference on the murder of Pınar Gültekin on 21 July 2020. My mother then told me 'Do not go, they will take you into police custody.' But I went to the conference. They told us we could hold a press conference. After the presser was over, we were supposed to leave the place with other women there. We marched on chanting slogans as we left the place. The police stopped us and told us that we could not walk like that. We responded by saying this was a legitimate right. A commotion happened with the police. A tall, chubby security department police officer with curly hair and white t-shirt punched me. Then I was taken to a custody vehicle. I was literally thrown into the vehicle. They swore at us and battered us in the custody vehicle. They tried to squeeze our friend's head in the window. While I was trying to stop this a police officer threw me away from the back. We were taken to Bozyaka State Hospital. I was not given any medical report indicating battery. I was released after I gave my statement."

#### **Applications before İHD's Mersin Branch:**

On **25 July 2020**, xxx stated in his application that he was a member of HDP's party assembly and youth assembly and he was being followed by unknown persons. Xxx indicated that he had been followed by unknown persons by car and on foot for the last two weeks.

#### **Applications before İHD's Van Branch:**

On **13 March 2020**, H. Ö. stated the following in her application that she had received a text from 531 361 8351 on 12 March 2020 that said: ' Ms. H., I am Ayaz from the anti-terror department. I called but you did not pick up. We need to talk about your spouse O. Ö. Can you return my call at your earliest convenience?' H. Ö. indicated that she went to the Anti-Terror Department in Van's Edremit District and found the police officer called Ayaz who was about 175 cm tall with fair skin and thick curly hair. According to H. Ö., the officer took her to a shed with no cameras and asked her about the whereabouts and contact details of her spouse O. Ö. In response H. Ö. stated that her children were in touch with their father who was working at a building site in Iraq. The police officer called Ayaz wanted her to give his phone number to her spouse and wanted to talk to O. Ö. directly adding that he could have gone to her house at night if he wanted to. According to H. Ö.'s statement, she received a text from the same number in the evening of the same day that said: 'Ms. H., I waited for your husband to call but he did not. I guess he does not have a favorable opinion.' H. Ö. requested help from our association.

On **13 March 2020**, A. Y. stated the following in his application: "Five police officers, who said that they were from the security department, came to my place on 12 March 2020 at about 10:00 and told me that I had to

give a statement at the department. After they got me on the car, they did not take me to the department but drove around. They requested that I act as a spy for them. They threatened me saying 'We will not let you live; we would make you unable to go out in the public by libel and destroying your reputation.' They also said 'This will not be the last time; we will come over and over again until you make your mind up.' I hereby lodge an application before your association because I do not have safety of life. I request humanitarian and legal assistance from your association."

On **6 May 2020**, H. B. K. stated in his application that he was a member of HDP's youth assembly and party assembly and he had been residing in Van since February 2020 in Van due to an official assignment. H. B. K. indicated that he was subjected to physical surveillance by civilian law enforcement officers many times during this period and on 4 May at about 15:00 a civilian man stopped him as he was leaving a shop on Cumhuriyet Street in Van. According to H. B. K., this person showed him his police id and asked to see his; while a white vehicle stopped after he showed his id and he was forced into this white vehicle by this and another person in plainclothes. H. B. K. indicated that he asked the persons whether he was in police custody or not to which they said he was not. He stated that this conduct he was exposed to was "abduction" and they should immediately release him as this was unlawful. According to H. B. K., he was not let out the vehicle and the persons in the car put forth trumped-up charges against him and his party activities in Van that he refused. They asked questions. He told them that he was an employee at HDP and all their activities there were legal with no involvement in any illegal matter whatsoever. H. B. K. told them that if they kept on asking such questions, he would not answer and if they wanted to take his statement, he should have been summoned to the police department where he would go with his lawyer. Then they drove outside the city from Şabaniye neighborhood along the Hakkari-Başkale road with three persons in the car. One person drove the car, while one sat in the passenger seat and another one beside him. According to H. B. K., these two other persons except for the driver talked to him, threatened and insulted him saying: 'We will be nice to you this time. We do not want to see you around here. If we see you again, we will not treat you in the same way. You will not do anything in Van until the religious holiday. You will leave Van as soon as travel restrictions are lifted. If you do not, you will see another face of ours. You know our style. Just today we got five of your friends arrested; it is too easy for us to get you and your friends arrested. We can now take your bag and plant a gun in it, take a photo of you passing this road and get you arrested claiming that you attempted to assassinate the soldiers and police officers on the road; we can say you were in preparation for (an illegal) act. You would be jailed for years. We have an order here; we will not let you upset that order.' According to H. B. K., their police id cards were also fake since they had numerous id cards saying that if they were to come across at a gendarmerie point, they would have shown gendarmerie id cards. H. B. K. indicated that the persons claimed that they were senior officers and no one would be able to see them unless they themselves wanted to. H. B. K. stated that he was held in the car for a total of two or two and a half hours while the person sitting next to him spoke in a disturbingly close physical distance. According to H. B. K., they passed numerous police check points along the way while the persons showed at these points their police id cards in spite of the fact that they had claimed that the id cards were fake. They eventually turned the car back to Van city center and H. B. K. was made to get off the car around Kurubaş village where he saw that the license plate of the car was 65 AAT 923. He walked to the village on foot and contacted his friend to pick him up. According to H. B. K.'s account, he did not see the face of the driver but the one in the passenger seat was a tall man in his early 30s with dark skin and short hair who was wearing a mask while the one sitting next to him was a tall, heavyset man in his late 30s with some grey hair and did not wear a mask. H. B. K. also indicated that the person sitting next to him was the one who threatened him and talked more. H. B. K. requested our association's assistance into the matter.