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PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

**Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General
on human rights defenders, Hina Jilani**

Addendum

MISSION TO TURKEY

Corrigendum

1. Page 4, paragraph 5

Replace the paragraph by the following text:

During the 1990's, political violence and the resulting conflict in the south-eastern region of Turkey created a difficult environment for human rights defenders. The policies and methods adopted by the State to confront the armed activities of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK)¹ resulted in negative consequences for human rights defenders and their work which have been a prolonged and serious concern for the civil society in Turkey. During the conflict, individuals and organizations working at unveiling human rights abuses experienced multiple obstacles and serious hostility to their work. Human rights defenders who denounced the dramatic effects of conflict on the situation of human rights in the southeast and questioned State policies were frequently perceived as a threat to the State and as PKK supporters. As a result, representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), lawyers, doctors, journalists and many others suffered from serious human rights abuses, including arbitrary detention, ill-treatment and torture, threats, but also disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Those working at monitoring the situation in the southeast, a region under state of emergency from 1987 to 2002, appear to have been disproportionately affected due to the excessive powers vested in the regional authorities by the emergency laws.

2. Page 6, paragraph 12

Replace the paragraph by the following text:

Eight legislative packages were also passed in the last three years and new civil, penal and criminal procedure codes were adopted. The reforms include key measures on fundamental freedoms, of particular relevance to the framework in which human rights defenders operate.

3. Page 8, paragraph 29

Replace the paragraph by the following text:

At the time of her visit, the new law had not yet been passed and associations were still regulated by the restrictive regime of Law No. 2908. She welcomes reports that the Parliament has now adopted the new legislation on association (No. 5253), which entered into force on 23 November 2004, and is hopeful that this will contribute to a significant improvement in the environment for the functioning of human rights organizations.

¹ In its comments on the draft report, the Government of Turkey asked the Special Representative to characterize the PKK with additional language. However, for the purpose of this report on the situation of human rights defenders, and given the context in which the reference to PKK is made, the Special Representative does not find it either necessary or relevant to make any characterizations in the report.

4. **Page 23, paragraph 108**

Replace the paragraph by the following text:

She welcomes the Government's initiatives to develop a culture of human rights within the State and create mechanisms for the protection of human rights. In particular, she welcomes the creation of a department of associations. The Special Representative has also received assurances from the Government that preparations were underway for the establishment of a national human rights commission. She hopes that the importance of the independence of the commission, the scope of its mandate and the recognition of the critical role that human rights defenders can play in the functioning of the commission will be fully considered in the preparatory process. She is also encouraged by the positive role that the country's highest courts have started to play as guardians of fundamental freedoms.

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