Human Rights Council, 34th Session
2nd March 2017
Agenda Item 3 – Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Torture
Statement delivered by Ms Perisan KEVCI
Contact: derek.brett@ifor.org (Main representative in Geneva)

Mr Melzer, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation welcomes your choice of Turkey for your first country mission. Civil society in Turkey has long reported that torture in the country is endemic, but individual cases go widely unreported and uninvestigated. In this respect, your comments on “the significant disconnect between policy and reality” are particularly timely.

In particular the curfew which has applied since the end of 2015 in many Kurdish cities and villages has been a cover for the widespread use with impunity of torture. Most notoriously, in the Spring of 2016, dozens of people were tortured over an extended period in basements in the city of Cizre many subsequently being burned to death.

A separate individual case is reported by our Turkish partner organisation IHD - the Association of Human Rights - on a Kurd, M.D, now held in Sanliurfa T Type Prison. When arrested for allegedly killing two policemen, he was taken not into a custody facility but to a cave near Ceylanpinar, where there are various torture implements, where over a period of three days he was stripped, beaten and tortured, sexually assaulted and urinated upon. During these humiliations his face was bound in a red, yellow and green cloth, representing the colours of the Kurdish flag. Once, recovering consciousness after fainting, but while his face was still bound, he claims that he recognised the voice of the local prosecutor. Finally one of his teeth was drawn with a claw.

After this ordeal, he was briefly taken to the hospital in Urfa, before being delivered to the police department anti-terror branch, where the torture continued.

Mr. Melzer, we regret that the Council will not have the opportunity to consider the full written report on your mission until the 37th Session. Will you be continuing a dialogue with the Government of Turkey over the next twelve months? To what extent will your report be able to reflect developments, including reports from NGOs on the ground subsequent to your visit?