

FACTSHEET ON THE DEATH OF MUSTAFA KABAKÇIOĞLU¹

BACKGROUND

Mustafa Kabakçioğlu, a 44-year-old former Turkish police officer, was arrested on July 26, 2016, over his alleged links to the faith-based Gülen movement, which the Turkish authorities accuse of orchestrating a failed coup in July 2016.

Kabakçioğlu was then sent to a prison facility in the northeastern province of Gümüşhane. He was removed from public service by a decree-law in September 2016, along with some 130,000 public sector workers summarily dismissed due to their real or perceived ties to the Gülenist group.

TRIAL AND CONVICTION

After standing trial for terrorism, based on evidence such as the donations he made to the Gülen-affiliated Kimse Yok Mu charity organization, downloading a mobile messaging app that the Turkish authorities claim is exclusively used among the members of the movement and the testimony of a close friend denouncing him as a member of the group; Kabakçioğlu was sentenced to 7 years, 6 months in prison. His conviction was upheld by the Supreme Court of Appeals (Yargıtay). He was expected to be released in March 2021.

ISOLATION IN A QUARANTINE CELL

On August 20, 2020, he was placed in a quarantine cell in prison as a suspected case of Covid-19 after he started to suffer from frequent coughs. He lived in the cell for nine days until, in early hours of August 29, prison guards found his lifeless body sitting on a chair.

Prison physicians estimate that he passed away around 2:00-3:00 in the morning.

SUSPICIONS SURROUNDING ISOLATION AND TREATMENT

Two days prior to his demise, Kabakçioğlu wrote his last petition to the prison administration, complaining about the adverse effects of the medication that he was given.

"I am regularly using the medication that you gave me. However, I think that they are causing side effects. Particularly, there have been swellings in my mouth on the left side and in my left leg. I am having difficulty walking and speaking. As I am writing this petition, I am experiencing numbness in my arm. I am unable to ensure movement below the waist. I am unable to perform any of my tasks."

(Kabakçioğlu's petition to the prison administration dated August 27, 2020)

¹ Source: "Karantina hücrelerinden cenazesi çıktı: Plastik sandalyede ölüm!," Sevinç Özarslan, Bold Medya, October 14, 2020, <https://boldmedya.com/2020/10/14/cezaevinde-olen-khkli-mustafa-kabakcioglunun-olum-anina-ait-fotograflara-bold-ulasti/>

A note added to the petition by a prison physician says that the patient was referred to the ward for internal diseases, that it was strongly recommended to proceed with further examinations on the patient, and that the patient should use the prescribed medication; although it is not known when the note was written.

Another document dated August 27, 2020, is an official report prepared and signed by the prison physician, the health officer and two correctional officers; alleging that Kabakçioğlu repeatedly asked not to be hospitalized despite the availability of emergency medical teams for his transfer. The report also suggests that Kabakçioğlu presented a petition asking not to be hospitalized. However, no such document was available as of writing of this factsheet.



FIGURE 1: KABAKÇIOĞLU'S LIFELESS BODY FOUND SEATED ON A PLASTIC CHAIR IN HIS QUARANTINE CELL

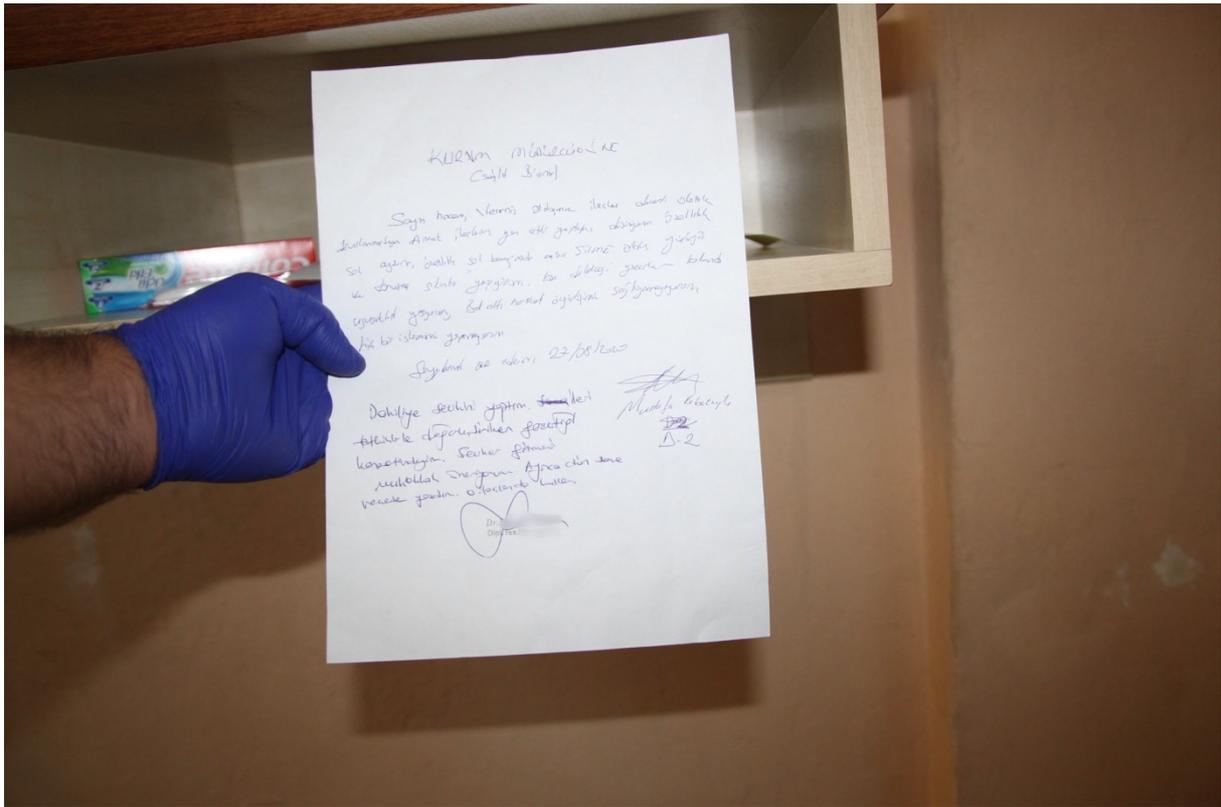


FIGURE 2: KABAKÇIOĞLU'S LAST PETITION TO THE PRISON AUTHORITIES, WITH A NOTE ADDED BY THE PRISON PHYSICIAN

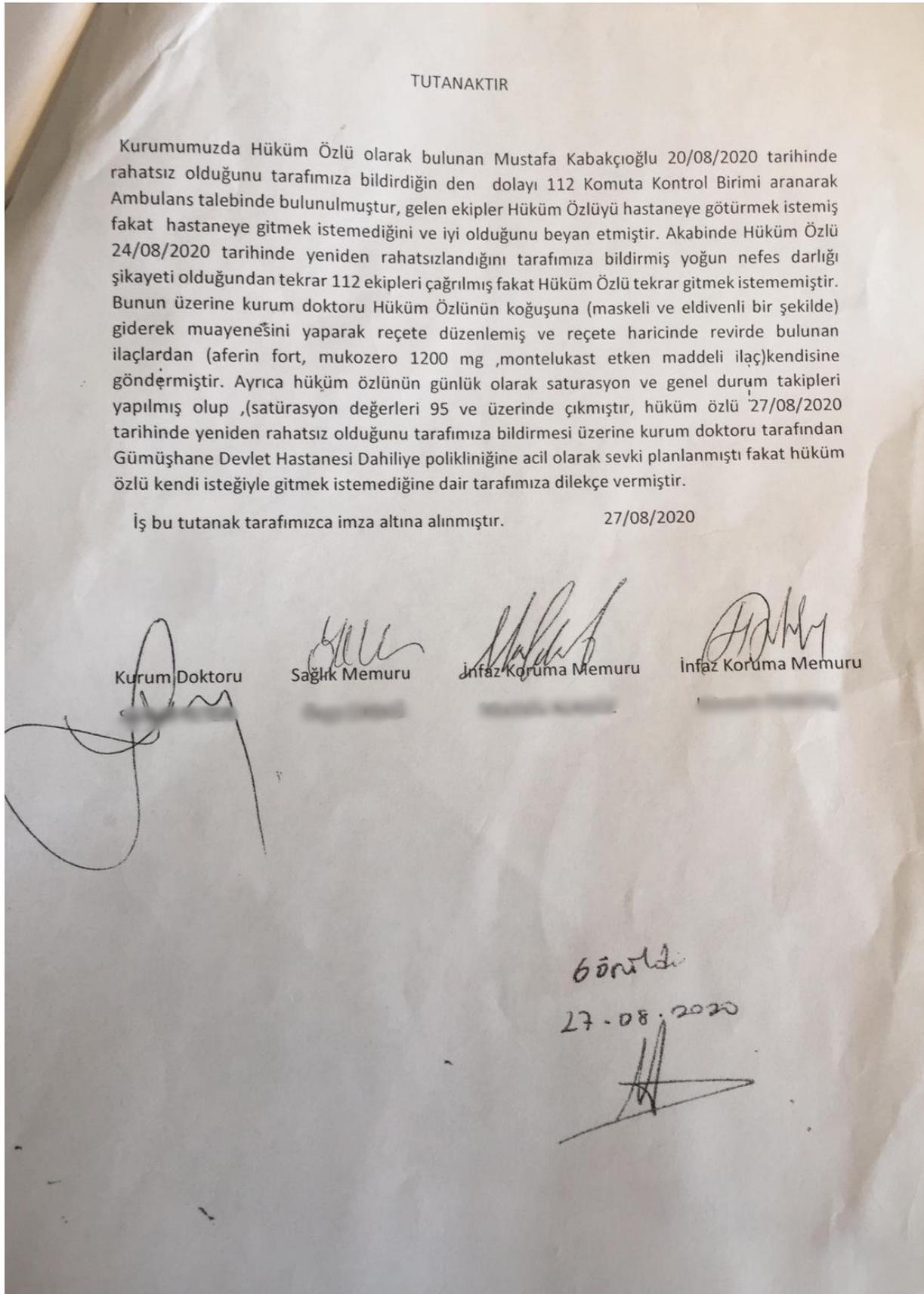


FIGURE 3: REPORT BY PRISON OFFICIALS STATING THAT KABAKÇIOĞLU REFUSED HOSPITALIZATION