

# MENTAL DISABILITY RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL

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Contact: Eric Rosenthal - 202.361.9195 (US or Turkey); [erosenthal@mdri.org](mailto:erosenthal@mdri.org)  
Laurie Ahern – 202.361.1402 (US or Turkey); [Lahern@mdri.org](mailto:Lahern@mdri.org)  
In Istanbul: Sehnaz Layikel – 90-532-650-8676; [sehnazlayikel@gmail.com](mailto:sehnazlayikel@gmail.com)

## **HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP ACCUSES TURKEY OF TORTURE AGAINST CHILDREN AND ADULTS WITH MENTAL DISABILITIES**

ISTANBUL, TURKEY - September, 28, 2005 – Following a two year investigation, Mental Disability Rights International (MDRI) released its findings today in a report detailing the human rights abuses perpetrated in Turkey against children and adults with psychiatric and developmental disabilities. *Behind Closed Doors: Human Rights Abuses in the Psychiatric Facilities, Orphanages and Rehabilitation Centers of Turkey*, describes the widespread use of electroconvulsive or “shock” treatment (ECT) on psychiatric patients – as young as 9 years old – without the use of anesthesia. The investigators also found evidence of children dying from starvation, dehydration and lack of medical care in so-called Rehabilitation Centers for children with both developmental and physical disabilities.

“These are Turkey’s most vulnerable citizens. The inhuman and degrading treatment that they are forced to endure is intolerable in any society. ECT without anesthesia is nothing less than torture and is an established violation of the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture,” said attorney Eric Rosenthal, Executive Director of MDRI and an expert on international human rights law.

“The government of Turkey can bring an immediate end to these abuses,” says Rosenthal. “As the European Union (EU) meets to consider Turkey’s human rights record on October 3, 2005, we ask them to demand action by the government of Turkey to end these human rights violations.”

MDRI is an international advocacy organization dedicated to the human rights and full participation in society of people with mental disabilities worldwide. For more information visit [www.mdri.org](http://www.mdri.org)

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For a copy of the report, video clips or photographs contact Samia Khan at 202-296-6522; in London, please contact Ivan Fišer at 4420-8922-6418.