

PUBLIC

AI Index: ASA 22/002/2005

09 February 2005

Further Information on UA 20/05 (ASA 22/001/2005, 21 January 2005) - Fear of Forcible Return/Fear of torture or ill-treatment

JAPAN	Erdal Dogan (m) and his family]	
	Zeliha Kazankiran (f)]	
	Hatice Kazankiran (f)]	Turkish Kurds
	Mercan Kazankiran (f)]	
	Safiye Kazankiran (f)]	
	Mustafa Kazankiran (m), her son]	

The Kazankiran family have had their permission to remain in Japan extended to 24 February, while Erdal Dogan and his family may now remain until 21 February. The Japanese government have indicated that the Kazankiran family will be resettled in a third country, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is working towards this.

Erdal Dogan's application for asylum is still under consideration and a final decision is to be issued later in February. If his application is rejected, he and his family are liable to be forcibly repatriated to Turkey. Officials from the Japanese Embassy have interviewed his family in Turkey, with the help of local police. If he and his family are forcibly returned, they risk being detained without charge, and tortured.

Campaigning by human rights activists, including the UA network, has raised the public profile of these cases, and may have contributed to the Japanese government's improved treatment of the families. A local high school teachers' group collected 63,000 signatures on a petition calling for the Kazankiran and Dogan families to be given refugee status, and handed this to the Immigration Bureau.

The Tokyo Regional Immigration Bureau extended the Kazankiran family's stay on 24 January, after interviewing them. It is very unusual for Japanese government ministers to speak publicly about asylum issues, but on 25 January the Minister of Justice told journalists that the decision on the Kazankiran family had been made on humanitarian grounds. The same day, the Ministry of Justice unexpectedly made public a written statement it had sent to the Japan office of the UNHCR, presenting its counter-argument to the UNHCR's criticism of the 18 January deportation of Ahmet Kazankiran and his son Ramazan, who had been recognised as refugees by the UNHCR. The following day, the prime minister defended the deportation during a speech to the upper house of Japan's parliament but also indicated that the rest of the family might be resettled in a third country by the UNHCR.

Ahmet and Ramazan Kazankiran have not faced any persecution from the authorities since they were returned to Turkey. Ramazan Kazankiran has been conscripted to fulfil his compulsory military service. The men's family in Japan have been able to contact them, but with some difficulty.

Many thanks to all who took action on this case. If possible, please send a final round of appeals, in English or your own language:

- welcoming the decision to extend the permission to remain in Japan that has been granted to Erdal Dogan, his family and the five members of the Kazankiran family;
- reminding the authorities that Japan is a party to the UN Refugee Convention and the Convention Against Torture, which prohibit the return of any person to a country where they would be at risk of torture;
- urging the authorities not to return Erdal Dogan and the other Turkish Kurds to Turkey, where they would be at risk of torture and other serious human rights violations.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Minister NOONO Chieko

Ministry of Justice

1-1-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku,

Tokyo 100-8977, Japan

Fax: +81 3 3592 7088

+81 3 5511 7200 (via Public Information & Foreign Liaison Office)

Email: webmaster@moj.go.jp

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Minister MACHIMURA Nobutaka

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

2-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku

Tokyo 100-8919, Japan

Fax: +81 3 6402 2796 (General Administration Unit)

Email: webmaster@mofa.go.jp

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

National Newspaper

Asahi Shimbun

5-3-2 Tsukiji, Chuo-ku,

Tokyo 104-8011, Japan

FAX: +81 3 3545 0285/3593 0438

National Newspaper

Yomiuri Shimbun

1-7-1 Ohtemachi, Chiyoda-ku

Tokyo 100-0004, Japan

Fax: +81 3 3245 1277

+81 3 3217 8247 (newsroom)

Email: dy@yominet.ne.jp (newsroom)

and to diplomatic representatives of Japan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 March 2005.