

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/18/96

EXTRA 14/96

Fear for safety / Fear of torture

1 February 1996

TURKEY

Ay_e Aslan (f)

Muhabet Aslan (f), aged 12

Zahide Aslan (f), aged about 17

]

Aslan Köçer, aged 28

] killed

one unidentified armed PKK member

]

Ay_e Aslan and her 12-year-old daughter, Muhabet, have not been seen since 30 January 1996, when they were taken into unacknowledged police custody. Amnesty International is deeply concerned for their safety.

On 30 January at around 5pm an armed clash developed in the course of a police operation in the Abdülkadirpa_a and Yeni Turan quarters of Nusaybin, a town on the border with Syria in the province of Mardin. According to newspaper reports the Nusaybin police chief, a superintendent and a Special Team member were killed as well as two armed PKK members.

According to other sources, the security forces, in pursuit of a fleeing man, subsequently entered the courtyard of Ay_e Aslan, shot at and wounded Zahide Aslan and Aslan Köçer, a relative, as well as an unidentified man, presumably an armed PKK member involved in the clash. The three later died of bullet wounds.

The police then took Ay_e Aslan, her five-year-old son Abdullah, and her 12-year-old daughter, Muhabet, away. The little boy was later returned to the mayor of Yeni Turan, but his mother and sister remain unaccounted for. Relatives of Ay_e Aslan have been unable to obtain any information as to their whereabouts.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The PKK has been fighting Turkish security forces since 1984 in an intense conflict in which more than 18,000 people have been killed, including civilians. Any person suspected of supporting the PKK or any other illegal armed organization is at serious risk of torture, "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution. At least 35 cases of "disappearance" in police custody have been reported in 1995.

Procedures laid down in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code for the prompt and proper registration of detainees, and for notification of their families, are almost universally ignored. Lack of prompt registration and notification is extremely distressing for the families of detainees, and creates the conditions in which "disappearances" and torture can occur.

People suspected of offences under the Anti-Terror Law can be held in police custody without access to family, friends or legal counsel for up to 30 days in the 10 provinces under State of Emergency in the southeast such as Mardin province, and for 15 days in the rest of Turkey. When not being interrogated, detainees are held in cramped, airless and insanitary conditions. With no access to the outside world they are at the mercy of their interrogators. Torture methods include being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, hanging by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electric shocks, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Ay_e Aslan and her daughter Muhabet, aged 12, detained in Nusaybin on 30 January 1996 and since held in unacknowledged detention at an undisclosed location;
- urging that an immediate investigation be carried out to establish their whereabouts and that their family be informed of the outcome;
- appealing that they not be subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- requesting to be informed of the results of the investigation.

APPEALS TO:

1. Mardin Chief Prosecutor:

Cumhuriyet Ba_savc_s_
Mardin Savc_l____
Mardin, Turkey

Telegrams: Cumhuriyet Savcisi, Mardin, Turkey
Salutation: Dear Sir

2. Governor of Mardin province:

Mr Yahya Gür
Mardin Valisi
Mardin Valili_i
Mardin, Turkey

Telegrams: Valili_i, Mardin, Turkey
Salutation: Dear Governor

3. Deputy Emergency Legislation Governor:

Mr Ahmet Kayhan
Ola_anüstü Hal Valisi
Diyarbak_r, Turkey

Telegrams: Olaganustu Hal Valisi, Diyarbakir, Turkey
Telexes: 72110 OHVT TR
72084 DYVA TR "please forward to the Governor"
72090 JASY TR

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Mr Deniz Baykal
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
D_i_leri Bakanl____
06100 Ankara

and to diplomatic representatives of TURKEY accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 March 1996.