

PUBLIC

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Torture & ill-treatment/ fear for safety 12 June 2002

TURKEY Abbas A. (m), street vendor, husband of M.A.  
M.A. (f), 40 years old, mother of E.A.  
E.A. (f), 5 years old, their daughter  
K.B. (f), 21 years old, relative of M.A.

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Police in western Turkey have threatened to kill the people named above, after they filed a complaint that three of them, including a five-year-old girl, had been tortured in custody. The women have asked for their full names not to be given.

K.B. and M.A. went to Police Headquarters in the Bozyaka district of Izmir on 30 May at 7pm, to hand over the identity cards of two relatives who had been detained on suspicion of theft. They took five-year-old E.A. with them. A group of police officers, including the Chief of the Department of Theft and Fraud, reportedly punched and kicked them, and beat them with truncheons. The police reportedly beat E.A. on her legs until she fell to the ground.

The women say the police swore at them and made them squat. When they could not stay in that position, the police beat them again. The Chief of the Department of Theft and Fraud dragged K.B. and M.A. across the ground, and made them kiss his shoes. He also pulled their hair and hit their heads against the wall. He reportedly warned them, "...if you complain to the prosecutor, I'll do the same things again".

The two women and the young girl were held at the police station for 12 hours without being formally detained. They were not allowed to go to the toilet, and were given nothing to eat or drink.

On 31 May the women filed a formal complaint with the state prosecutor against the police officers involved. The prosecutor said that he would initiate proceedings to identify the perpetrators. He sent the two women and the girl for forensic medical examinations which documented bruising on their bodies.

Police officers from the Department of Theft and Fraud saw the women lodging the complaint, and reportedly threatened and harassed them in the court building that houses the prosecutor's office. Since then the family has been threatened continually. On 1 June, police officers came to their house and threatened them again, and told them to withdraw their complaint.

On 6 June, Abbas A. - the husband of M.A. and father of E.A. - apparently received threatening calls to his mobile phone from men who said they were working at the Department of Theft and Fraud. One of them was apparently the Chief of the department, who gave his name and told Abbas A. "...you'll take back the complaint otherwise I'll have you taken away and an extrajudicial execution will happen". Later that day, one of the police officers who had made telephone calls came twice to the house of Abbas A. and M.A. and asked for them. Police officers reportedly came to the house again on 10 June, looking for the family.

The prosecutor has reportedly taken no action yet about these threats. Abbas A. is said to be too frightened to continue working as a street vendor. His wife told A., "I am afraid to go home and cannot cook for my five children. My little daughter has sleeping problems since she was beaten by the police and saw how we were tortured. I am afraid to go to the hospital. Please help me."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lawyers and human rights defenders in Izmir have recently recorded several cases of people who were tortured or ill-treated because they were suspected of criminal offenses or simply because they did not comply with humiliating demands or protested against degrading treatment by police officers. The Chief of the Department of Theft and Fraud is said to have been personally involved in several of these cases. When the victims file formal complaints they are threatened and harassed to make them withdraw the complaints.

Torture appears to be regularly used in police stations to force detainees to "confess" or give information. It is also used to intimidate detainees into becoming police informers, or simply to punish them. Torture and ill-treatment of individuals detained for non-political offenses are widespread but difficult to document. Torture methods in Turkey documented by Amnesty International include severe beatings, being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, suspending 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 appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Abbas Al-nea and his relatives, who have been threatened by officers from the Department of Theft and Fraud after they filed a formal complaint about torture by police on 31 May;
- urging the authorities to ensure that none of them are tortured or ill-treated in custody, and that the threats and harassment are stopped immediately;
- urging the authorities to open an immediate, comprehensive and independent investigation into the allegations of torture, threats and harassment, with the officers involved suspended from duty during investigation and dismissed from the service if convicted;
- reminding the authorities that Turkey is a state party to the European Convention on Human Rights, of which Article 3 states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior

Mr Rüstü Kazım Üçelçen

Ministry of Interior

İçişleri Bakanlığı

06644 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams:** Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

**Fax:** + 90 312 418 17 95

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

Prof Hikmet Sami Türk

Ministry of Justice

Adalet Bakanlığı

06659 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams:** Justice Minister, Ankara, Turkey

**Fax:** + 90 312 417 3954 / 418 5667

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

Governor of Izmir

Izmir Valiliği, Izmir, Turkey

**Telegrams:** Izmir Vali, Izmir, Turkey

**Fax:** + 90 232 4832285

**Salutation:** Dear Governor

Izmir Police Headquarters

Izmir Emniyet Müdürlüğü

Izmir, Turkey

**Telegrams:** Emniyet Müdürü, Izmir, Turkey

**Fax:** + 90 232 4490029

**Salutation:** Dear Chief of Police

**COPIES TO:**

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Nejat Arseven

Office of the Prime Minister,

Başbakanlık

06573 Ankara, Turkey

**Fax:** + 90 312 417 04 76

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.