

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 319/00 (EUR 44/55/00, 19 October 2000) -
Torture/ill-treatment

TURKEYFahriye B_k_n (f), aged 65
_ekernaz Çakal (f), aged 56
Müyesser Güne_ (f), aged 48
Rahime Ince (f), aged 65 (called Rahime Inci in original)
Azize Y_ld_z (f), aged 39
Murat Batgi, aged 31

The five women from the Peace Mothers Initiative are now known to have been sexually abused by gendarmerie, as well as otherwise tortured and ill-treated. They are still in custody.

According to the Human Rights Association İnsan Haklar_ Derne_i (IDH), the women were blindfolded and stripped naked while in custody at the Gendarmerie in Silopi. They were verbally abused, and the soldiers said things like "you bitch, did you go there to sleep with [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan head Jalal] Talabani?" and threatened to harm their relatives. The soldiers squeezed Azize Y_ld_z's breasts and took nude photos of her, telling her that they would print the photos in a daily tabloid paper with the headline "The wife of the owner of daily *Yeni Gundem* [a newspaper owned by her husband] was caught acting as a prostitute (sic)".

Gendarmes at Silopi Gendarmerie Station reportedly beat the women around the head and neck, strangled them with their headscarves and squeezed their throats so they could not breathe. Although Fahriye B_k_n had undergone a hip operation recently and suffers from high blood pressure, she was made to stand up all night. Müyesser Güne_'s shoulders and throat were squeezed, and she still suffers pain as a result. _ekernaz Çakal, who has undergone head surgery, was treated similarly. The soldiers throttled Rahime Ince, beat her around the head, pulled her hair and hit her shoulders with a heavy object. She still suffers from headaches and shoulder pains.

The women were arrested on 4 October along with their interpreter when they returned from Iraq, where they had gone to mediate between the two sides in the civil conflict in the Kurdish region. They are remanded in Mardin Prison. The charges against them are not yet known, but Amnesty International fears they may have been detained solely for campaigning for peace in the region. They are members of the Peace Mothers Initiative, an organization of Kurdish women, who have lost children in the conflict.

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

- expressing deep concern at the allegations of torture, ill-treatment and sexual abuse made by the women and their interpreter;
- urging the government to carry out a full and impartial investigation, including an independent medical examination, to establish the truth of these allegations, and asking to be told the results;
- urging the authorities to suspend any officers accused of torture from duty while they are under investigation, and to dismiss them from the forces if they are convicted;

- reminding the government of its obligations under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Turkey is a state party: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Professor Hikmet Sami Türk

Adalet Bakan_ ,

Adalet Bakanl_ ,

06659 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Adalet Bakan_ , Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 417 3954 / 418 5667

Salutation: Dear Minister

Govenor of rnak

_rnak Valisi

_rnak Valili_i

_rnak

Turkey

Telegrams: Sirnak Valiligi, Sirnak, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

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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 13 December 2000.