

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: EUR 44/65/95
Distr: UA/SC

EXTRA 66/95

Fear of torture / Fear for safety /
Prisoner of conscience

6 June 1995

TURKEY

Salih Bal, former editor-in-chief of *Medya Güne_i*
Hilal Okumu_ (f)
Zelal Bo_a (f), telephonist at *Medya Güne_i*
Mehmet Sanr_, correspondent with *Medya Güne_i*
Rifat Yüksekaya

The five people named above were taken into custody on 2 June 1995. The authorities have acknowledged that Salih Bal, his wife Hilal Okumu_ (who is eight months pregnant), Zelal Bo_a and Mehmet Sanr_ are being held at the Anti-Terror branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters, where it is feared they may face torture. These four were arrested at their homes in Istanbul.

There is particular concern for the safety of Rifat Yüksekaya, who the authorities have so far denied is in custody. He was detained while visiting Zelal Bo_a's family. The father and a brother of Zelal Bo_a, who were also detained, have since been released.

In January 1994 Istanbul State Security Court confirmed a five months' prison sentence against Salih Bal for an article in the Kurdish-owned newspaper *Medya Güne_i* (*Sun of the Medes*). Together with other colleagues at *Medya Güne_i* he was charged with "separatist propaganda" under Article 8 of the "Anti-Terror Law". A warrant of arrest was issued, but Salih Bal did not submit himself. Amnesty International considers Salih Bal to be a prisoner of conscience.

The detention of *Medya Güne_i* staff in Istanbul coincides with detentions in Diyarbak_r. To Amnesty International's knowledge at least 25 people, several of them affiliated with *Medya Güne_i*, were detained around 31 May 1995 in Diyarbak_r.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The authorities' denial that they are holding Rifat Yüksekaya is disturbing, in view of the increasing number of "disappearances" which have occurred throughout Turkey since 1991. Between 1980 and 1990 the Turkish Human Rights Association (HRA) registered about a dozen cases of "disappearance". In 1991 there were a handful of reports, and several more in 1992. In 1993 there were at least 26. In 1994 there were at least 55 confirmed cases of "disappearance".

There are over 100 people in Turkey imprisoned under Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law for "separatist propaganda", most of them journalists and many of whom are clearly prisoners of conscience. The Turkish government had announced that the Article 8 of Anti-Terror Law might be abolished in May 1995, but this did not happen.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Rifat Yüksekaya who was detained on 2 June 1995, but whose detention has not been acknowledged;
- urging that immediate steps are taken to establish his whereabouts and requesting to be informed of the results of this investigation;
- expressing concern for the health of Hilal Okumu_ who is being held in custody despite being eight months pregnant;

- urging the authorities to ensure that all detainees are being treated humanely in accordance with international standards
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Salih Bal, whom Amnesty International considers to be a prisoner of conscience.

APPEALS TO

1) Chief Prosecutor at Istanbul State Security Court

Mr Ahmet Köksal

DGM Ba_savc_s_

Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemesi

Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: DGM Bassavcisi, Istanbul, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Istanbul Chief of Police:

Mr Necdet Menzir

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü

_stanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Istanbul, Turkey

Telexes: 30811 IEHM TR; 30812 EMMH TR; 26177 IEMT TR

Salutation: Dear Sir

3) State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Algan Hacalo_lu

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476

Telegrams: State Minister for Human Rights, Ankara, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

President of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Sabri Yavuz

nsan Haklar Ara_t_rma Komisyonu Ba_kan_

TBMM

Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 420 5394

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 6 July 1995.