

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/90/96

EXTRA 92/96

Fear of torture

18 June 1996

TURKEY

Gülçin Özgür (f), aged 15

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of a 15-year-old Kurdish girl, Gülçin Özgür, who has been detained for the second time this year after having publicly described the sexual assault and torture she was subjected to during her first detention in February 1996. It is feared that she is being subjected to further torture while being held at the Police Headquarters in Mersin.

On 13 June police raided the house in Mersin, in which Gülçin Özgür is now living with her mother and four-year-old sister. When the police detained Gülçin Özgür, her mother insisted that she, the mother, be detained with her. However, at the Police Headquarters Gülçin Özgür's mother was forced to leave. Gülçin Özgür remains in detention.

In February 1996 Gülçin Özgür was detained in the Bismil district of Diyarbakır province because she did not carry an identity card. She was held for 16 days and interrogated on suspicion of being a member of PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) and of trying to join their fighting units in the mountains. On 5 June the Kurdish-owned newspaper *Demokrasi* reported a public statement the girl had made, describing the sexual assault to which she was subjected during her 16-day detention at the Gendarmerie Commando Battalion in Bismil and the torture, which included being stripped naked, hosed with pressurized cold water, suspended by the wrists and threatened with death.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There are strong cultural inhibitions in Turkey against reporting sexual torture. Nevertheless, Amnesty International frequently receives allegations of sexual assault and harassment of detainees in police custody. Until 1992 all detainees had the right in theory to see a lawyer, but in practice this right was routinely denied. In November 1992 the right of access to a lawyer was formally withdrawn for those detained under the Anti-Terror Law, although it was retained for people charged with criminal offences.

When safeguards are ignored detainees can be exposed to gross abuses. Even children and minors are not secure. The Turkish Criminal Procedure Code requires children to be interrogated by a prosecutor in the presence of a lawyer. However, this provision is often ignored.

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

- expressing deep concern for the safety of 15-year-old Gülçin Özgür, detained at Mersin Police Headquarters since 13 June 1996, after publicly describing the torture she was allegedly subjected to during detention in Bismil in February 1996;
- urging that she not be subjected to any form of torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that she be questioned only in the presence of a lawyer, and that she be granted access to her family;
- urging that she be promptly brought before a judge to be charged or released;
- asking to be informed of the grounds for her detention.

APPEALS TO:

1) Chief State Prosecutor in Mersin:

Cumhuriyet Ba_savc_s_
Hükümet Kona__
Mersin, Turkey

Telegrams: Cumhuriyet Bassavcısı, Mersin, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2. Mersin Chief of Police:

Mr Hasan Özdemir
Mersin Emniyet Müdürü
Emniyet Müdürlü_ü
Mersin, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Mersin, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

3. Interior Minister:

Mr Ülkü Güney
Ministry of Interior
_çi_leri Bakanl____
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1795

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Mr Emre Gönensay
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
D__i_leri Bakanl____
06100 Ankara

Fax: +90 312 419 1547

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 20 July 1996.