

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: EUR 44/148/91
Distr: UA/SC

UA 376/91 Fear of Torture/Health Concern

7 November 1991

TURKEY:

Mahmut Akta_
Mustafa Karasu
Sabri Ok
Mehmet Can Yüce
Halil Kaya
R_za Altun
Celalettin Can
Feridun Y_lmaz
Co_kun Al_çl_
Birol _aman
Fevzi I_k
Selahattin _im_ek
Sadrettin K_z_lkay_n, lawyer
Deniz Teztel (female), journalist
Hatice Temel (female)
Hatice Suna (female)
Songül Özdemir (female)

and about 190 other political prisoners

Following the escape of two political prisoners from Ankara Central Closed Prison on 29 October 1991, the authorities have begun to move political prisoners from all over Turkey to Eski_ehir Special Type Prison where allegedly they have been ill-treated upon arrival and are now being held in conditions of extreme social isolation. By 5 November, around 200 left-wing political prisoners, some convicted and some still on trial or awaiting trial, were reported to have been transferred to Eski_ehir Special Type Prison where they have begun hunger-strikes in protest.

Fourteen lawyers travelled to Eski_ehir to see their clients, but only five were permitted to enter. One lawyer interviewed five of his clients. They all told the same story: that they had not been ill-treated during the journey, but that immediately after entering the main gate their clothes were torn off, they were blindfolded and had most of their belongings taken away. The men had their heads shaved by force and all were severely beaten with sticks and truncheons while being taken to their cells. Lawyers noted that most prisoners received injuries to back and legs, but generally not to the face. Lawyers also saw clothing scattered around the entrance to the prison.

According to the reports received:

- Mahmut Akta_, brought on Sunday from Gaziantep Special Type Prison, had very severe bruising on the back. In addition he had been suffering from meningitis and has not been permitted access to a doctor.
- Mustafa Karasu, brought from Bursa Special Type Prison, had blood in his urine resulting from the beating, as well as serious wounds on the back and face.

- Sabri Ok, brought from Gaziantep Special Type Prison, had difficulty walking as a result of beating - the exact nature of his injuries is not known.

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- Mehmet Can Yüce, brought from Canakkale E-Type Prison, had no clothes on at the interview; the lawyer gave him his jacket.

- Feridun Yılmaz, brought from Ankara Central Closed Prison, had a fractured skull and torture marks.

- Haldun Karyol, brought from Bartın E-Type Prison, had broken ribs and shoulder.

- Coşkun Alçıl, brought from Ankara Central Closed Prison, had a broken nose and was bleeding.

Halil Kaya, Rıza Altun, Celalettin Can, Birol Şaman and Fevzi İlik also received injuries.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In April 1991, new legislation, the so-called "Anti-Terror Law", was introduced. Under Article 16, any prisoner standing trial or convicted under the provisions of this new law is to be held in extreme conditions of solitary confinement.

The "Special Type Prison" in Eskişehir, one of some 40 prisons previously built for political prisoners, was converted to the requirements of the Anti-Terror Law. This prison has now a capacity for 252 prisoners in one-person cells, and 60 in three-person cells. Each one-person cell measures eight square metres and has a toilet, hot water, television and a separate exercise space of similar size. Three-person cells cover 25 square metres each and are arranged in a block of 20 giving out onto an exercise yard which each group will use at a separate time. Meals will not be taken communally but will be brought to the cells. Under the provisions of the law, prisoners may be held for up to 33 years in these conditions of isolation.

The dangers of prolonged isolation (including small-group isolation) for the physical and mental health of prisoners are generally recognized. Marked symptoms of severe isolation found in prisoners who were held in solitary confinement and small-group isolation in the Federal Republic of Germany included disturbances of the autonomic nervous system (the system responsible for the response of the body to the environment) - for example very low blood pressure and circulation problems, severe problems of the digestive tract and sleep disturbances. Disturbances relating to the intellectual capabilities of prisoners included severe concentration problems, articulation problems and, in extreme cases, hallucinatory symptoms. Emotional disturbances led to depressive reactions, with ultimately suicidal tendencies.

Discussions with penal experts lead Amnesty International to conclude that it is possible to combine security with humane treatment and that the regime laid down by the

Anti-Terror Law would almost certainly result in damage to the mental and physical health of the prisoners. In such cases it would, therefore, constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, prohibited by international human rights treaties to which Turkey is a State Party.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters:

(If it is felt that four recommended actions are too long for telegrams or faxes, please do not let this deter you from sending them, but only raise the first three recommendations. The fourth can be left for inclusion in letters only.)

- calling for an immediate, thorough and independent investigation into the alleged ill-treatment;
- asking that all those injured during the transfer are given prompt medical attention;
- appealing that the prisoners held in Eski_ehir Special Type Prison including those named above should not be subjected to the conditions of severe isolation provided for by Article 16 of the Anti-Terror Law;
- urging that immediate consideration be given to the repeal of Article 16 of the Anti-Terror Law.

APPEALS TO

Minister of Justice:

Prof. Dr. Suat Bilge
Adalet Bakanl____
06659 Ankara, Turkey

Dear Minister

Telegrams: Adalet Bakanligi, Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: +90 4 125 40 66

Minister of the Interior:

Mr Sabahattin Çakmakolu
İçişleri Bakanl____
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Dear Minister

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey
Telexes: 46369 IC SL TR
Faxes: + 90 4 118 1795

COPIES TO: - Diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country;

President of Parliamentary Human
Rights Commission:

Mr Eyüp A__k
İnsan Hakları Araştırma Komisyonu Başkan____
TBMM
Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 4 11 91 664
+ 90 4 42 06 941

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 18 December 1991.