
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 89/93

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: External - Turkey, Israel and the occupied territories.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

PLEASE NOTE

Africa Rights just put out a report about Somalia. Since several sections have asked about this, this is just a reminder that AI never comments on or endorses other human rights organizations or their work. This implies no criticism of Africa Rights, but we apply this policy across the board.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Saudi Arabia - 14 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 89

Sudan - 29 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 89

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Turkey - today

Please note that recommendations for action around the enclosed news service item on Turkey are contained in document AI Index: EUR 44/72/93, being mailed to campaign co-ordinators today. The IS will be sending this to Turkish media, but sections may want to use it to raise publicity.

Laos - 9 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 87 & 88

Georgia - 10 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 83

North Korea - 23 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Myanmar - 6 October (International)

EJEs and "Disappearances" - 20 October (International)

Venezuela - 10 November (International, linked to EJEs & Disappearances)

AI INDEX: EUR 44/WU 06/93 EXTERNAL
30 JULY 1993

TURKEY: KURDISH VILLAGERS TORTURED AND EXTRAJUDICIALLY EXECUTED BY SECURITY FORCES AND DELIBERATELY KILLED BY PKK IN "TOTAL CONFLICT"

On 11 July, during a press briefing at the headquarters of the Turkish armed forces, it was announced that the government would pursue a policy of "total conflict" in its fight against guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK).

Amnesty International has previously expressed concern that in security operations Kurdish villagers might be subjected to torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution by gendarmerie and village guards, or to "execution" by guerrillas of the PKK (See News Service 75/93, item index: EUR 44/WU 05/93, July 1993).

Since then, Amnesty International has been receiving reports on a daily basis of human rights abuses against Kurdish villagers. Security forces are carrying out intense operations in villages which have refused to participate in the system of government-appointed village guards. During past weeks, destructive searches were followed by the burning of all or part of dozens of villages and enforced migration of their population. In Çayırdere, near Ergani in Diyarbakır province, villagers were reportedly ill-treated by gendarmerie, given pick-axes and ordered to destroy their own homes.

Any villagers taken into police custody are at serious risk of torture or worse. During the course of the month of July a further death in custody, apparently as a result of torture, came to light. According to the villagers of Kerkatık, Çar in Diyarbakır province, on 21 June 1993 Şadık Öncü, an imam (prayer leader), was beaten for several hours before being taken into incommunicado detention at Çar Commando Headquarters. On 8 July 1993 his family were telephoned and told to go to the morgue of Diyarbakır Medical Faculty. The family reported that Şadık Öncü's body had widespread bruising and marks left by ropes around his neck and wrists. Çar Commando Headquarters have denied detaining Şadık Öncü.

Both male and female detainees have reported various forms of sexual assault, and also rape. On 20 June, gendarmes and village guards raided the village of Taşlı, near Derik in Mardin province. They detained 17-year-old Ükran Aydın who, together with her father and sister-in-law, was interrogated at Derik Gendarmerie Headquarters about the whereabouts of guerrilla hideouts. Ükran Aydın described what happened to her: "First they tortured us all together. Then they took me to a separate room. They blindfolded me. A member of the gendarmerie, I think, took off my clothes and made me lie down on my back. Realizing his intentions, I resisted and he covered my mouth to stop me shouting. Then he raped me. Three days later I was released. They said they would kill me and my family if I reported the rape." Ükran Aydın later received a medical report consistent with her allegation of rape and made a formal complaint to the local prosecutor saying that she would be able to recognize the officer who raped her.

There have also been reports of extrajudicial execution and "disappearance". A member of parliament submitted a complaint to the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Grand National Assembly concerning five villagers from the village of Özbaoğlu who were reportedly taken from their homes by security forces on 2 July, taken outside the village and shot dead. Another villager was shot and wounded with the others but survived and was able to give his account of the incident to the member of parliament. A group of six villagers (See Urgent Action, AI Index: EUR 44/68/93) detained by members of the Mobile Gendarmerie Commando Unit from the village of Görümlü on 14 June have "disappeared" and are believed to have been killed, although no bodies have yet been found.

During the press briefing mentioned above, the media were invited to support the government and security forces by reporting events with a "unity of voice". Fears that this may involve a disinformation campaign or news blackout in the southeast were increased during July by arrests of two journalists of Özgür Gündem (Free Agenda) during the course of their investigation of human rights violations (See AI Index: EUR 44/69/93 and 44/71/93), judicial attempts to close the newspaper down, and a series of claims of disinformation. The killing of 26 Kurdish nomads, including 14 children and eight women, on the Sündüz plateau near Bahçeşarayı in the province of Van on 18 July

was immediately reported as having been carried out by guerrillas of the PKK. However, survivors later reported that they had "no quarrel" with the PKK, and that the attackers, who spoke poor Kurdish, only began shooting after learning that this particular settlement had not joined the village guard corps. The bullets used were of state manufacture.

Amnesty International has addressed the PKK repeatedly about "executions" of captured village guards and alleged informers, and about attacks on civilian targets. However, the arbitrary and deliberate killing of prisoners by the PKK - clearly outlawed by international humanitarian law - have continued at a rate of more than one a day. Such killings of village guards are apparently carried out with the intention of discouraging villagers from participation in the village guard corps. In some cases, PKK guerrillas have also killed female prisoners: Kadriye Tunç and her 19-year-old daughter Rabia Tunç were abducted from K_z_itepe, in Mardin province and were found dead on 8 July 1993 - reportedly they had been suspected of collaborating with the security forces. During July civilians were killed by the PKK because they were employed by government organizations such as the PTT (Post, Telegraph, Telephone), and even for refusing to join commercial boycotts. Civilians were also the victims of a series of bomb attacks on hotels in the tourist resort of Antalya in which Alpaslan Şahin, a waiter, was killed and 30 others, including children, were injured. The PKK did not deny responsibility for these bombs which were not directed against military targets but were clearly positioned with the intention of killing and maiming civilians.

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AI INDEX: MDE 15/WU 07/93 EXTERNAL FOR RESPONSE ONLY
30 JULY 1993

ISRAEL/SOUTH LEBANON: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED AT TARGETING OF CIVILIANS

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the Israeli bombardment of civilian areas in Lebanon, particularly in light of statements indicating that the intention is to force civilians to leave the area or risk death. It is also seriously concerned about rocket attacks against civilian areas within northern Israel carried out by Hizbullah.

Since 25 July the Israel Defence Force has been carrying out a persistent and widespread bombardment of south Lebanon villages and Palestinian refugee camps, north of the Israeli-controlled "security zone". Some 25,000 artillery rounds and aircraft missiles have been fired, causing over 100 dead, mostly civilians, and extensive damage to property. At least 200,000 people are reported to have left the area and fled northwards, mainly towards Beirut.

Israeli officials, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, have stated that this military initiative is being carried out against Hizbullah, the main armed group fighting Israel and its ally, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), in south Lebanon. They have said that the bombing of south Lebanon is deliberately aimed at forcing the civilian population to flee the area and put pressure on the Lebanese Government to prevent Hizbullah from carrying out attacks against Israel, specifically the launching of Katyusha rockets inside northern Israel.

On 26 July, radio broadcasts from Israel and the "Voice of the South" (a radio run by the SLA) called on residents of named villages and refugee camps to leave "because your villages are going to be bombarded". On 27 July an Israeli commander was quoted saying "we are firing to destroy the villages. We intend to reduce these places to rubble so that the terrorists will not be able to hide in them any more."

The Israeli commander of the Artillery Corps was quoted as saying on 28 July that his forces were "firing into the villages in order to cause damage to property. The aim is to create a situation in which the residents will leave the villages and go north. The aim is to damage the infrastructure, to destroy the villages and the houses of the activists and the locations from which the rockets are fired. A large part of the rocket-launchers were placed inside villages".

Also on 28 July the Israeli forces suspended the bombardment for about three hours, calling on the remaining population to evacuate their villages before the bombing resumed. The "Voice of the South" warned that "Those who fail to leave their houses will be responsible for their lives". Shells are reported to have fallen indiscriminately on homes and other buildings.

Since 25 July over 270 Katyusha rockets have been fired by Hizbullah on northern Israel and the "security zone", killing two civilians and forcing tens of thousands to seek refuge in shelters or flee the area. Hizbullah officials have reportedly indicated that such attacks will continue "as long as our people are being attacked".

Amnesty International takes no position on military confrontations such as the one currently taking place in south Lebanon. It opposes extrajudicial executions by governments as well as deliberate and arbitrary killings by armed political groups.

Any deliberate targeting of civilians by either side should stop immediately.

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